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Deconstructing public discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States
in the twenty first century

by

Kwadjjo Owusu-Sarfo

A Dissertation Presented to the
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences of Nova Southeastern University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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Nova Southeastern University
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This dissertation was submitted by Kwadjo Owusu-Sarfo under the direction of the chair of the dissertation committee listed below. It was submitted to the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and approved in partial fulfillment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Conflict Analysis and Resolution at Nova Southeastern University.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my father, mother and two brothers who have supported me through this journey. I would not have made it without your constant support, prayers and loving words, which continually egged me on. I also dedicate it to Pamela Darko, who has been an inspiration and a rock by my side every step of the way. I will forever remain indebted to these special people in my life.

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Abstract

As the United States prepares to elect a new president, immigration continues to be one of the most controversial topics on the national agenda. While Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump announced his candidacy for president with the intent to build a wall along the border with Mexico, the Democratic presidential candidate, Hillary Clinton, has opted, instead to push for comprehensive immigration reform. The difference in approach is symptomatic of the divisiveness within the immigration debate. To explore this divide in depth, the dissertation's research question is: What does the discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s reveal about the most salient drivers of conflict related to immigration. Using qualitative discourse analysis, the dissertation investigated coverage of the discourse on undocumented immigration in the mainstream news media, hoping to break the discourse into parts that can be examined to gain a deeper understanding of sources of conflict. Through the use of qualitative data analysis software, coding categories determined through identified sources of tension in the discourse spawned themes and topics that helped to analyze points of conflict. Through analyses of these themes, the research uncovered elements in the discourse that facilitated intergroup conflict through negative constructions of the out-group by the in-group. In order to mitigate conflict, the discourse on undocumented immigrants in the United States needs to be reconstructed in a way that untangles immigration issues from security issues and addresses the racialization and criminalization of immigration. In-depth media coverage of immigration stories with context can help facilitate a more constructive discourse.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Dating back to its founding, immigration to the United States has always spawned controversial debate. The immigration debate has been ever present in American public discourse, from “each wave of new immigrants, like the Irish in the 1840s, Chinese in the 1870s, Italians at the turn of the century, Cubans in the 1960s, Southeast Asians in the 1970s...” (Roleff, 1998, p. 16) to the influx of unaccompanied minors from Central America via the southwest US border with Mexico in 2014. The latter event is noteworthy in today’s debate because it is part of a chain of events that have reignited the debate on undocumented immigration and immigration reform as hot topics within the public discourse. By the time of the 2008 U.S. presidential elections, the debate had gained such relevance that one of U.S. President Barack Obama’s stated goals as a presidential candidate was to work with the United States Congress to address the country’s well-documented problems with immigration, a system both his Democratic party and Republicans agree is broken and in need of reform (Chomsky, 2014, p. 201). However, seven years into his presidency, partisan divisions over immigration reform have prevented any substantial government action on immigration.

The inaction over reform leaves millions of people living in the country facing an uncertain future regarding their status. Unable to legally work, many undocumented immigrants find themselves working illegally to support themselves and their families. Since many undocumented immigrants flee poverty from their homeland in search for better paying jobs, some employers take advantage of their illegality by exploiting them for cheap labor (Chomsky, 2007, p. 3). Often, undocumented immigrants end up taking

jobs that appear unattractive to American citizens (Chomsky, 2007, p. 16) or find themselves in direct competition with low-skilled American workers over low-paying jobs (Chomsky, 2007, p. 27). For this reason, anti-immigration advocates have argued that the employment of undocumented immigrants robs American citizens of jobs and drives down wages as undocumented workers typically earn more from low-paying jobs in the United States than they would back in their native countries (Carter & Sutch, 2007). In addition, the perception that undocumented immigrants enjoy social services without paying taxes reinforces anti-immigrant and conservative arguments that they represent a burden to society. These arguments form part of a narrative that asserts that due to the need for cheap, foreign labor in the United States seemingly creates an open-door policy for undocumented migrants, who upon arrival, face persecution from state authorities and are denounced by nativists (Nativism is a construct scholars use to explain the hostility and intense opposition toward an out-group, based on foreign connections ascribed to the out-group by the in-group) and xenophobes as a threat to the nation.

The tragic events of September 11, 2001 prompted a renewed focus on undocumented immigration in the 2000s that had already begun in the 1990s. The United States ushered into the 1990s, in the midst of a prolonged recession and increased inflows of immigrants, both documented and undocumented migrants/visitors. According to the 1990 U.S. Census statistics, the foreign-born population in the country comprised the largest population of immigrants in the world (Portes & Rumbaut, 2014, xxvi). This influx of immigrants sparked several nativist protests, especially in border states, where uproar over “illegal” border crossings of Mexicans led to the U.S. Border Patrol

instituting Operation Gatekeeper in California (1994) and Operation Hold-the-Line in Texas (1993). The prolonged economic recession of the 1990s exacerbated nativist concerns about undocumented immigration, and by 1994, California's passage of Proposition 187 had vaulted undocumented immigration to the top of the country's policy agenda (Portes & Rumbaut, 2014, p. 211). Proposition 187, which denied undocumented immigrants access to public services like education and healthcare, was an example of states' attempt to control immigration (both legal and undocumented) and symptomatic of growing anti-immigrant sentiment in the United States in the 1990s. With immigration being one of the hot topics in the 1996 Presidential elections, undocumented immigration had begun to take on more of a national focus rather than just a major issue in border states.

As the United States headed into the 21st century, undocumented immigration took on another level of significance. The September 11, 2001 attacks had inspired a different kind of anti-immigrant fervor. An op-ed in *The New Republic* in 2006 cited a June 2002 survey by The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations which noted that the "concern about terrorists entering the country...appears to be contributing to the high level of support for reducing immigration" (Judis, 2006). Although the survey noted that its respondents were more concerned about terrorism than undocumented immigration, its findings suggested that the heightened national focus on terrorism emanated from concern that "illegal" border crossings provided a gateway for terrorists into the country (Judis, 2006). Even as terrorism dominated public discourse in the years immediately following the attacks, an influx of legal and undocumented immigrants into Arizona,

owing to stricter border enforcement in neighboring Texas and California, increased fears about undocumented immigration and helped re-awaken the latent anti-immigrant fervor that had begun in the 90s.

In November 2004, opponents of undocumented immigration in Arizona successfully campaigned to pass Proposition 200 (also known as The “Arizona Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act”), a measure designed to deny “public benefits” to people who could not provide proof of their American citizenship (Judis, 2006). Proposition 200 mirrored California’s Proposition 187, which had been passed a decade earlier. Although Proposition 187 was later voided in 1999 and parts of Proposition 200 were struck down in 2006, both legislative measures were indicative of the significant anti-immigrant wave that had gripped certain parts of the country.

A clear sign of the magnitude of this anti-immigrant wave was the political response it provoked as well as the reverberations of the political response. In 2005, the House of Representatives’ passage of The Border Protection, Anti-terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act (H.R. 4437), which sought to make illegal immigration a felony while calling for the construction of a 700-mile security fence along the U.S-Mexico border, sparked nationwide protests in several major cities as immigrants and immigrant rights advocates railed against the bill’s provisions and pushed for a comprehensive reform of the country’s immigration laws that would include a path to citizenship for all undocumented immigrants. During the protests, the Senate introduced the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act (CIRA, S. 2611), a bill which reflected some of the provisions in the House’s bill but also proposed the legalization of undocumented

immigrants. Although neither bill would become law due to disagreements in Congress, both were instrumental in adding a wrinkle to an immigration debate that would greatly shape the enforcement of immigration policy and awaken uneasy tensions between the federal government and individual states in the latter part of the decade and beyond (Ferre, 2006).

The latter part of the decade witnessed increased raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in immigrant communities, in operations geared towards cracking down on undocumented immigration that would continue through the end of the Bush presidency and into the Obama presidency in 2008. This period also marked attempts by states to control undocumented immigration by crafting legislation similar to H.R. 4437. In 2010, Arizona passed SB 1070, regarded by many to be the strictest measure passed against undocumented immigration in decades (Archibold, 2010). The law, which garnered national and international attention, instructed all foreigners to carry legal documentation and empowered law enforcement to check an individual's immigration status during a lawful stop upon "reasonable suspicion that the individual is an undocumented immigrant" (Arizona H.B. 2162, §3.). The controversial law raised concerns about racial profiling, especially toward Arizona residents of Hispanic descent and immigration activists pushed for it to be repealed.

Nevertheless, SB 1070 received support from other parts of the country and sparked a series of similar legislative actions against undocumented immigration in other states. On June 25, 2012, the United States Supreme Court struck down key portions of SB 1070, citing that those portions included provisions that conflicted with federal law.

The Supreme Court's decision to strike down key parts of the bill highlighted an uneasy tension between states and the federal government over immigration: individual states argued that undocumented immigration was a pressing problem and the need to take action by themselves was motivated by the federal government's apparent inability to address the problem through measures that ensured that the country's borders were secure from unauthorized immigration. The Obama administration, meanwhile, resisted attempts to address the issue at state level, maintaining that an overhaul of the country's immigration system offered the best solution. The continued push by states to regulate undocumented immigration ramped up pressure on the federal government to take action, especially since the U.S. constitution largely delegates that power to the federal government and not to individual states. These series of events explain how immigration reform became a part of public discourse and one of the major topics on the national agenda in the 2000s. It is important to contextualize immigration reform today as a consequence of the momentum built by anti-illegal immigration legislation at the state level, which precipitated the need for action to address undocumented immigration at the federal level.

The debate surrounding undocumented immigration in the 2000s is reminiscent of the 1990s, albeit uniquely shaped by events and factors particular to the 2000s. Like the '90s, the debate runs concurrent with a weakened United States economy, characterized by the loss of jobs and cuts in government spending as the country continues to recover from its worst economic recession since the Great Depression. This decade (2011-2020) coincides with a wave of immigration to the United States that may surpass an all-time

high in the 90s (Rumbaut & Portes, 2014, xxii), and like the 90s, undocumented immigrants have come under attack from nativists and xenophobes, who claim that undocumented immigrants pose economic, socio-cultural, security and identity threats to the United States.

The purpose of this dissertation is to deconstruct the discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s (2000-2014) in order to investigate the most salient points of conflicts involved within the discourse, and through the analysis of the data and interpretation of the results from this investigation, to better understand how they contribute to conflict. In addition, the dissertation is intended to breathe new life into the debate on how undocumented immigration is conceptualized and talked about in the public sphere by exploring and critiquing the processes by which the discourse is socially constructed and the role these processes play in shaping views and making meaning about undocumented immigration. Since public discourse often plays an important role in influencing political action, an identification of the most salient points of conflict within the discourse could be crucial in reconstructing the public discourse on undocumented immigration, which, in turn, could inform efforts to craft sound immigration policy and enact effective immigration reform.

As pointed out earlier, the September 11, 2001 attacks, which occurred at the turn of the 21st century, have played a defining role in reshaping the debate on undocumented immigration, providing different contexts to an already evolving discourse. Much like the 1965 Immigration Act and the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act were steeped in eras that highlighted different layers, themes, contexts and actors within the

immigration debate, the 2000s continue to reshape the debate with their own unique set of contexts, actors, events and themes. Although the 2000s represent a different epoch along the debate timeline, this period is interwoven into a very complicated and multi-faceted tapestry of historical, political, economic, social and cultural contexts that are constantly in flux. Thus, while the dissertation will mostly focus on the discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s until 2014, it is inevitable that some common motifs, patterns and other information from earlier periods or current events will be utilized to provide some historical context. By the same token, the analyses, findings and conclusions arrived at in this dissertation are intended to be a useful resource for future research on undocumented immigration in the United States and the discourses about it.

The rest of Chapter 1 provides some detailed background discussion on undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s, beginning with the Bush presidency through the Obama presidency as a primer to the problem statement for the dissertation, which will wrap up chapter 1. A breakdown of the chapters following Chapter 1 is as follows: Chapter 2 will deal with relevant theories for the dissertation, which are social constructionism, social identity theory, economic self-interest and contact theory. Chapter 3 will discuss the literature review. An overview of the methodology will be provided in Chapter 4, while chapter 5 will cover the presentation of the data, to be followed by data analysis in Chapter 6. Chapter 7, the final chapter, will engage in discussion and implications of the study.

A Closer Look at Undocumented Immigration in the United States in the 2000s

It is worth noting that anti-immigrant sentiment and concerns about undocumented immigration were not particular to the 2000s. In the first half of the 1990s, voters in California passed Proposition 187, which was a measure to cut public spending on undocumented immigrants and prohibit them from using social services such as health care and education. Although Proposition 187 was later challenged and found to be unconstitutional in a federal court, it was symptomatic of the wave of anti-immigrant sentiment, particularly towards undocumented immigrants of Hispanic descent in the United States in the 90s. Yet, such sentiment was mostly concentrated in some border states and regions, rather than on a national level. Judis (2008) notes that “in the 1990s, the anti-immigration movement, which scored a victory with California’s passage of Proposition 187 in 1994 and was embraced by the new Republican majority in Congress, dissipated after the 1996 election largely because of the Clinton economic boom. With income and employment rising, Americans no longer felt as threatened by globalization. Fears of job competition and strained social services persisted in affected states, but they did not give rise to a national furor over illegal immigrants. Immigration disappeared as a national issue” (Judis, 2008).

In the 2000s, the tragic events of September 11, 2001, ignited fear of foreign terrorism and helped to generate more anti-immigrant sentiment. The attacks helped reopen a national conversation about immigration to the United States, but mostly focused on enforcing measures that would prevent future acts of terror from being carried out on American soil by foreign terrorists. Although the emphasis on the discourse

surrounding the attacks was placed on fighting terrorism, it rekindled anti-immigrant sentiment in the public square. A June 2002 survey by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations found that “concern about terrorists entering the country....appears to be contributing to the high level of support for reducing immigration” (Judis, 2008). Judis (2008) also noted that “anti-immigration forces have continued to charge that the Mexican border is a gateway to terrorists. The Arizona Minutemen have insisted (with little basis in fact) that many illegal immigrants are swarthy Muslims disguised as Mexicans.” (Judis, 2008). The hysteria over the September 11 attacks had begun to fuel connections between terrorism and undocumented immigrants within the immigration debate. *The New York Post* reported on March 14, 2002 that “law enforcement officials had begun to track down illegal immigrants as part of a new nationwide program to deport them quickly” from a list “that appears to focus on immigrants from countries where al Qaeda is very active” (Celona, 2002). Judis’ Op-Ed in *The New Republic* and *The New York Post* news article were a harbinger of how the discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States would evolve in the 2000s as a result of a major event that had sent shockwaves around the world.

The September 11th attacks were not the only developments to thrust the hot topic of immigration (legal and illegal) on the national radar in the 2000s. Demographic changes due to mass migration also played their part. According to Chomsky (2007, p. XIII), 35 million people, or about 10 percent of the U.S population comprised of foreign born individuals as of March 2005. This steep increase in the size of the foreign-born population highlighted a period of increased immigration to the United States, as a result

of both legal and undocumented immigration. Undocumented immigration to the United States, however, slowed in 2007 as the country experienced a recession, its worst economic crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Dubbed The Great Recession, it resulted in a weakened American economy, marked by loss of jobs and a decrease in the demand for labor. The loss of jobs and decrease in the demand for labor directly impacted the flow of undocumented workers to the United States and, as a result, the undocumented immigrant population reached its peak and began to stabilize (Massey, 2012). However, the rising unemployment rate due to the loss of jobs began to fuel anti-immigrant sentiment, especially in states or regions with high immigrant populations. The major concern was that American jobs were being lost to foreign workers (both documented and undocumented) and competition for these jobs had led to reduced wages and a strain on public services.

Undocumented Immigration during the Obama presidency

During his presidential campaign in 2008, then U.S. Senator Barack Obama appealed to voters, particularly Hispanics and pro-immigration advocates, ensuring them that he would implement legislation that would secure the border and work with Congress to craft comprehensive immigration reform that would grant a path to permanent residency for the country's 12 million undocumented immigrants. As president, he sought to gain bipartisan support for immigration reform by focusing on border security and cracking down on the employment of undocumented workers, both of which were prerequisites for Republican support for any bill on immigration reform. As a result of the president's emphasis on enforcement, the number of

deportations of undocumented immigrants soared in the first three years of his administration. For instance, by the end of Fiscal Year 2012, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement announced that 410, 000 undocumented immigrants had been deported, a record number under any presidential administration. In addition, the number of arrests at the U.S-Mexico border dwindled as stricter enforcement resulted in fewer border crossings (Moffett, 2014).

By the end of his first term as president, Barack Obama was facing pressure from both pro-immigration advocates and restrictionists to pass comprehensive immigration reform. Pro-immigration advocates criticized the president for failing to deliver on his promise to work with Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform by the end of his first term. Immigration restrictionists argued that undocumented immigration is on the rise despite media reports of record deportations, because the country's immigration laws were not being strictly enforced. Amidst the mounting pressure and gridlock in Congress due to Republican opposition to immigration reform efforts, the President sought legal avenues which would allow him to bypass Congress and take executive action to address immigration issues in the country.

One of these actions, indicative of his liberal stance on undocumented immigration, was to pass a more humane policy, which charged the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to exercise "prosecutorial discretion" over 300, 000 deportation cases. In a memo addressing the enforcement of immigration policy, USICE director, John Morton, noted that the agency has "limited resources to remove those illegally in the United States" (Morton, 2011). Therefore, enforcement agencies needed

“to prioritize the use of its enforcement personnel, detention space, and removal assets to ensure that the aliens it removes represent, as much as reasonably possible, the agency's enforcement priorities, namely the promotion of national security, border security, public safety, and the integrity of the immigration system” (Morton, 2011). As a result, the ICE developed criteria aimed at targeting undocumented immigrants with criminal records over those whose only offense was breaking the country’s immigration laws by entering the country illegally or overstaying their visas.

Another form of executive action taken by the President was to enact the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) in June 2012. DACA urged U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to exercise prosecutorial discretion towards certain undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children. Children who qualify for DACA would be allowed to remain in the country without the threat of deportation and be able to work. Although pro-immigration advocates lauded the president’s decision, it is worth noting that DACA did not grant legal status nor provide a path to citizenship to those who were eligible for it.

The president also took executive action in laying out new regulations that would reduce the amount of time that spouses and children of undocumented immigrants are separated from American relatives while applying for legal status (Moffett, 2012). This rule change was a victory for mixed status families in the United States, comprised of members who are American citizens and undocumented immigrants, because it allowed such families to petition U.S Citizenship and Immigration Services for hardship waivers

which permit an undocumented immigrant to stay in the United States rather than having to return to their home country to formally apply for a U.S. visa for re-entry. Pro-immigrant activists lauded this rule change, which enabled families to stay together while working with immigration officials to sort out their status problems, as a major step in legislating “sensible and compassionate” reform (Moffet, 2012).

Undocumented Immigration in 2014 and the Central American Child Migrant Crisis

As President Obama promised immigrant rights advocates of his plans to announce a series of executive actions intended to provide some relief for undocumented immigrants in the country in 2014, he was soon confronted with another problem: an influx of 57 000 unaccompanied minors fleeing violence and poverty in Central America. The influx of these minors at the southern U.S. border with Mexico resulted in a humanitarian situation with serious legal, political and administrative implications for the president’s plans for executive action on immigration. Politically, the president faced a conundrum as the influx of the minors at the border forced him to take short-term measures that seemed contradictory to his long term strategy to reform immigration.

A 2013 Gallup News Poll showed that he enjoyed public support to make changes to the country’s immigration system, which involved using his executive powers to stop deportations and to allow more undocumented immigrants to stay in the United States. However, the influx of thousands of minors overwhelmed resources and logistics available to border control officials, prompting the president to return to a strategy of expediting the deportation of undocumented minors to ease the humanitarian situation at

the border (Davis & Shear, 2014). This move was unpopular with many Democrats in Congress, who sought more humane measures to deal with the minors. As the influx of the unaccompanied minors intensified and dominated the news, a Washington Post-ABC News poll conducted in 2014 showed that many Americans disapproved of the manner in which the president was handling the case of the child migrants at the border (Nakamura, 2014). In addition, the president's detractors complained that the legal justifications for expediting deportations of unaccompanied minors who had just arrived at the southern border were not consistent with his policy of easing up on the deportations of undocumented immigrants already staying in the country. As a result, executive action on the child migrant issue faced not only political challenges, but legalistic concerns as well.

The Obama administration faced other challenges in its quest to reform immigration policy and address undocumented immigration. Congressional inaction on immigration reform meant that the weight of addressing the Central American child migrant crisis fell on the president's team, already tasked with making changes to the country's immigration policy. Moreover, immigration agencies and personnel charged with carrying out any new policy on immigration now had to divert resources to attend to the arrival of the Central American child migrants at the southern U.S border. The child migrant situation at the border with Mexico, in a nutshell, occurred at an inopportune moment for the Obama administration because it raised political, legal and logistical challenges that caused the administration to further delay executive action on immigration reform.

The president's opponents, comprising of conservatives and anti-immigration groups, argued that the arrival of unaccompanied minors at the border presented further evidence that his policies have encouraged undocumented immigration instead of curtailing it. The president, however, has maintained that the surge in child migrants at the border "only underscores the need to drop the politics and fix our immigration system once and for all" (Nakamura, 2014).

Unhappy with the series of executive actions taken by President Obama to address undocumented immigration, Congressional Republicans, along with 26 other states filed a lawsuit against him in 2014, arguing that providing deportation relief for millions of undocumented immigrants and issuing work permits for those who qualify under the rules set up by the Obama administration were well beyond his legal authority. In the aftermath of the lawsuit, a federal judge, Andrew Hanen, ruled on February 16, 2015 that the Obama administration had to temporarily halt the implementation of the president's executive actions. In response, the Obama administration, on March 12 2015, asked for an "emergency" stay of the judge's ruling, which would enable the administration to resume implementation of the President's executive actions while the lawsuit filed against it is being argued in the courts. However, the federal judge's reluctance to consider the administration's request has prompted the administration to forward the case to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. Should the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals rule against the Obama administration, it seems quite likely that the administration would then appeal to the US Supreme Court.

Statement of the Problem

The overarching research question of the dissertation is: What does the discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s reveal about the most salient drivers of conflict related to immigration? This research question is pertinent to the United States because the country finds itself at a crossroads in the 21st century. With the need to redress its immigration system high on the national agenda, the country must strike a healthy balance between how to regulate and modernize immigration in a way that meets its economic needs, upholds its tradition as a country of immigrants, enhances border security and keeps the country competitive globally. For the purposes of this dissertation, discourse will be defined as all communications acquired digitally through texts from some of the country's largest newspapers in circulation and the most influential magazines, media sites and polls, and data provided by governmental and non-governmental organizations that have shaped and continue to shape views and political action toward undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s (a detailed description of these sources will be provided in Chapter 4). Undocumented immigration is part of a larger debate about immigration to the United States that spans decades, and over time, has undergone changing contexts, forms and meaning. This dissertation aims to contribute to this fascinating, age-old debate on immigration by focusing on undocumented immigration, arguably the most controversial aspect of the larger debate.

In public discourse, immigration reform has become the umbrella term used to describe the United States government's attempt to craft sound policy that tackles undocumented immigration. As Portes and Rumbaut (2014) note, one of the major

challenges with reforming immigration is the tension between the widespread demand for immigrant labor within different sectors of the American economy and the anti-immigrant fervor and activities of nativists and xenophobes. This delicate tension has played a key role in vaulting undocumented immigration to the forefront of public discourse on immigration reform.

Passing immigration reform legislation that would, in part, address undocumented immigration, has been one of President Barack Obama's stated objectives since being elected in 2008. However, inaction in Congress due to the House's opposition to an Obama-backed immigration reform bill passed by the Senate in 2013 has put any attempts to pass legislation on undocumented immigration on hold. Although media polls conducted in 2014 suggest that immigration reform granting a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants enjoys general public support across party lines, significant differences within the degree of support, how to implement reform and what entails reform persist across partisan, generational and cultural lines. As such, support for immigration reform is anything but a consensus. The divisions within Congress and American society on undocumented immigration are indicative of a conflict that was summed up best by President Barack Obama in a speech on immigration reform to the nation in 2014: "this debate is about something bigger. It's about who we are as a country, and who we want to be for future generations." Projections released by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2008 provide more context to the President's comments as they predict that by 2050, minorities (classified as those of any race other than non-Hispanic, single-race whites) will constitute the majority of the U.S. population (Broughton, 2008).

The anticipated demographic shift, coupled with other findings in the projections, such as the high fertility rate of Hispanics, who already represent the largest minority group in the United States, have raised concerns among white nationalists who view this “browning” of America as a threat to their culture, way of life and American sovereignty. As migrants from Mexico and Central America comprise over half of the undocumented immigrant population in the United States, the role of both legal and illegal immigration in bringing about this demographic shift has provided another subtext to the immigration debate. Cries of “we want our country back” from Tea Party rallies seem coded with certain racial and socio-cultural undertones that speak to nativists’ and immigration restrictionists’ fear that they are “losing their country”. The pushback towards the country’s changing ethnic makeup seems to emanate from a desire to define and maintain a nativist conception of American identity.

This struggle to define American identity is facilitated through a quite polarizing and controversial discourse. A major reason the discourse is polarizing and filled with controversy is because it is fueled by certain unquestioned assumptions, stereotypes and myths that have played a major role in dividing opinion about undocumented immigration. As these unquestioned assumptions, myths and stereotypes are repeated within the discourse, those that resonate along partisan lines are taken to be self-evident and help reinforce the different positions and views held on undocumented immigration. Thus, the discourse becomes heavily politicized, and building consensus on actions and policies to address undocumented immigration become quite difficult. In addition, as the discourse becomes divided along partisan lines, positions on undocumented immigration

harden, which make it difficult to question the assumptions, myths and stereotypes taken as self-evident. The gridlock in Congress and the general ambivalence of the American public towards undocumented immigration are reflective of the misrepresentations, misconceptions and contradictions borne out in the discourse.

The public discourse on undocumented immigration in the 2000s can be examined in several different contexts: the tension over penalty versus reward for undocumented immigrants in the United States; the tension between how much undocumented immigrants contribute towards the U.S. economy and how much they benefit from public services (real and/or perceived); tension between preserving American cultural identity and assimilating undocumented immigrants and the tension between the United States ethos as a country of immigrants and an immigration policy that has increasingly criminalized immigration in the 2000s. All these different contexts interweave to create a very complex, multi-faceted public discourse on undocumented immigration.

The aim of this dissertation is to analyze this discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s and identify the most salient sources of conflict embedded within the discourse while taking all the previously mentioned contexts into perspective. As we will see in Chapter 4, these contexts will provide a lens through which the dominant themes within the discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s will be examined. The focus on the public discourse is important because it is the vehicle through which ideas, assumptions, fears and beliefs about undocumented immigration are expressed, challenged and reinforced. Examining

these different contexts is crucial to gaining a better understanding of why undocumented immigration remains such a controversial topic within the national conscience and is a subject that often transcends national boundaries to one of international concern. Also, since the discourse is often poisoned by myths, clichés and unquestioned assumptions, contextualizing it will aid in studying the processes and the factors involved in the creation of these myths and assumptions. Investigating how assumptions are formulated and formed enables us to distinguish between myths and realities, which is essential in our understanding of how undocumented immigration is constructed through discourse. It is important to separate myth from reality because myths often influence unquestioned assumptions that inform public discourse on undocumented immigration. It is also through discourse that myths are propagated and unquestioned assumptions can be challenged or reinforced. Thus, a look at the interplay between the public discourse on undocumented immigration and the elements that facilitate this discourse may shed light on how conflict is created through discourse and contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics involved in undocumented immigration and immigration as a whole in the 2000s.

A better understanding of the most salient drivers of conflict fueling the public discourse on undocumented immigration in the 2000s is important for several reasons. Public discourses are constructed, constituted and framed by language. Language shapes and influences how we talk about a phenomenon as well as how we perceive and experience it. Hence, a critical look at the role language plays in socially constructing knowledge about undocumented immigration provides an opportunity to break down the

discourse so that the relationship between language and conflict can be studied.

Understanding the relationship between language and conflict is crucial in reconstructing a new discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s and on immigration as a whole.

From a conflict analysis and resolution standpoint, there is a need to reconstruct the discourse on undocumented immigration because it is apparent that the on-going discourse itself feeds into the assumptions, perceptions and politics that have slowed down efforts to pass immigration reform and contributed to polarizing opinions on the phenomenon. Moreover, public discourse often influences norms, habits, values and conventions, all of which have consequences on how people perceive and experience the phenomenon. Discourse often plays a powerful role in shaping political thinking and political institutions. To this effect, reconstruction of the public discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s could breathe new life into an immigration debate riddled with tensions and divided opinion by introducing new ways of thinking, talking and writing about undocumented immigration, which may aid efforts to develop and implement sound immigration reform. An in-depth analysis of these tensions will help identify the sources of conflict that have made the discourse so polarizing and controversial. Also, identifying these sources of conflict will aid in understanding how the politics of immigration reform, which affects discourse and is itself impacted by discourse, has been counterproductive in addressing undocumented immigration and fixing the country's broken immigration system.

To undertake these tasks, the researcher selected qualitative discourse analysis as the methodology because it is geared towards studying the processes through which discourse is socially constructed. Studying such processes is a form of social inquiry into the underlying causes of conflict, a crucial step in the management, transformation and resolution of conflict. It is worth noting that, although the dissertation will focus exclusively on the discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s, its findings and conclusions may be useful and applicable on a transnational level because the discourse also involves issues (like border security, crime and employment) that present national security concerns to both the United States and countries that send immigrants to the United States. Hence, the study of the discourse and the identification of conflict drivers have significant implications for peace studies and the development of policies that adequately and effectively tackle undocumented immigration on a global scale.

Chapter 2: Theory

Theories help provide explanations behind social phenomena and an inquiry into the most salient drivers of conflict emerging from the public discourse on undocumented immigration in the 2000s can be analyzed through the lens of theories that seek to explain conflict along group lines. Before delving into a discussion of these theories, a discussion of undocumented immigration and the discourse about it from a social constructionist perspective is warranted because we engage in discourse through a meaning-making process by which we construct social reality and undocumented immigration is a phenomenon borne out of this meaning-making process.

Social Constructionism is a theory that posits that knowledge and many aspects of the world around us are not real, in and of themselves. Rather, they only exist because we enter into social agreements that attach a sense of reality to them. Social constructions are created as a result of these social agreements. Immigration and undocumentedness/illegality are social constructions rooted in ideas about migration on an international scale. Other social constructions such as citizenship, nation and sovereignty provide context to how we conceptualize, define and talk about undocumented immigration. In addition, the demand and supply of cheap, foreign labor, politics, global inequality, networks connecting migrant communities as well as complex international relationships between countries shape and contextualize how we think and talk about undocumented immigration to the United States in the 2000s.

Berger and Luckman (1991), two of the pioneers behind social constructivist thought, argued that conversation is an important vehicle for maintaining, modifying and

reconstructing subjective reality, which is comprised of shared meanings and and understandings. These shared meanings and understandings are coded with concepts that do not need to be redefined every time they are used in daily conversation, and thus come to represent a reality which is taken as fact or for granted. The discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States is filled with so many clichés, stereotypes and labels that help to construct concepts like illegality, citizenship and sovereignty in the minds of those who partake in the discourse, to the extent that these concepts seem self-evident and are rarely questioned in discourse.

If discourse has the tendency to shape ideas, then it follows that language functions as a precondition for thought. Ludwig Wittgenstein expounds on language as a precondition for thought by theorizing that, “the way we think and the concepts and categories we use when we think are provided for us in the language or discourse that existed before we entered into it” (Winslade and Monk, 2000, p. 39). Wittgenstein’s assertion bears out in today’s discourse on undocumented immigration in that the discourse is riddled with unquestioned assumptions, cliches and taken-for-granted beliefs inherited from ideas in past discourses on undocumented immigration that are regarded as facts or common sense knowledge. Chomsky (2014) adds that, “Our current system of organizing the world into sovereign countries made up of citizens (and, in almost all cases, noncitizens) has roots in past ideas and categories, which have evolved over hundreds of years. The laws that make some immigration - and thus, some people - “illegal” are recent creations, though they grow out of older ideas” (Chomsky, 2014, p. 24). When viewed through the lens of social constructionism, Chomsky’s findings

suggest that past ideas on undocumented immigration construct and frame newer discourse on the phenomenon, a claim consistent with Wittgenstein's theory.

Furthermore, Wittgenstein argues that the function of language as a precondition for thought does not just involve the construction of an event or reality, but that language is also constitutive of the event. That is, words used in language, rather than just acting as passive vehicles to construct or represent social reality, in and of themselves, also have meanings in the way that they are used to construct this reality. In fact, words "constitute our personhood as much as we use it to communicate with others" (Davies, B., 1993 in Winslade and Monk, 2000, p. 39). For instance, the choice of terms bandied around in popular discourse to refer to individuals who may have entered the United States without inspection or overstayed their visas, such as "illegal immigrant" or "undocumented immigrant" or "unauthorized migrant" do not just help to construct and define the concept of illegality, but also represent key words that highlight the different ideologies and viewpoints reflected in the discourse, and how they shape public opinion within the debate on undocumented immigration.

Social constructionism has significant relevance to the dissertation because it serves as a reminder that in performing qualitative discourse analysis, one is deconstructing a process that is socially constructed about a phenomenon that is also socially constructed. In other words, one is investigating the processes involved in the social construction of another social construction. Moreover, the construction of the discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s as well as the attempt to deconstruct the discourse are not independent of a researcher's subjectivity,

value-free or culturally neutral presuppositions. Similarly, an attempt to reconstruct the discourse after deconstruction in order to mitigate the impact of conflict would involve processes that are not immune from subjectivity, value-free and culturally neutral assumptions, interpretations and conclusions. Applying a social constructivist theoretical perspective complements the dissertation's focus on theories that attempt to explain conflict along group lines because the mechanisms by which groups self-identify and differentiate themselves, the interactions between and among groups and the structures that undergird such interactions are produced and facilitated by social constructivism.

One such theory that is quite relevant to the discourse on undocumented immigration to the United States in the 2000s is social identity theory. Formulated by Henri Tajfel and John Turner (1979), social identity can be defined as an individual's sense of who they are based on their group membership. Tajfel (1979) theorized that the groups people belong to are important sources of pride and self-esteem. The group provides individuals with a sense of social identity and a sense of belonging in the social world. Individuals from a group increase their sense of self-image either by enhancing the status of the group they belong to (in-group) or by discriminating and harboring prejudiced views against the groups they do not belong to (out-group). In this way, an in-group vs out-group dynamic is created through an "us" and "them" dichotomy. Tajfel calls this process social categorization, or the placement of people into social groups. (Mcleod, 2008)

According to social identity theory, an in-group will discriminate against an out-group to enhance its self-image. The group members of the in-group will try to find

negative aspects of an out-group in order to boost their self-image. In the process of ascribing negative traits to an out-group, prejudicial views and stereotypical images are fomented by the in-group. Discourse is an important part of this process because it is the vehicle through which these prejudicial views and stereotypical images are produced, facilitated and disseminated. Through discourse, for instance, stereotyping (i.e. putting people into groups and categories) of an out-group may be carried out by an in-group by exaggerating the difference between the two groups and the similarities of things within the in-group. The discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States is rife with stereotypes and other characterizations used by opponents of undocumented immigration to characterize undocumented immigrants in a negative light. Stereotypes such as “wetbacks,” “beaners,” “aliens” or “illegals” are not just discursive means of social classification but are also often loaded with racial/ethnic overtones employed by nativists and xenophobes to emphasize socio-cultural differences between undocumented immigrants and American citizens.

The use of these stereotypes by nativists and xenophobes in the social categorization of undocumented immigrants has roots in nationalism and the concept of the nation. In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson (1983) defines a nation as a socially constructed community, imagined by people who perceive themselves as part of that group. Anderson’s observation that the nation is depicted as an imagined community that is both sovereign and limited has parallels to the processes by which groups socially construct and categorize themselves (Anderson, 1983). Nations express their sovereignty through the construction of boundaries that delimit who is inside those boundaries and

who is outside. This delineation of boundaries is analogous to the processes by which in-groups form and exclude themselves from out-groups. Through shared histories, language, traditions, beliefs, symbols and values, a nation or group acquires a shared identity which plays a role in building social cohesion and establishing boundaries that differentiate it from another entity.

According to Jeong (2000), “a perceived threat produces a narrow definition of group boundaries and sharp distinctions between friends and enemies. Unthinkable actions can be induced by a dehumanized image of the enemy reinforced by nationalistic propaganda” (Jeong, 2000, p. 68). This dynamic helps explain why an increase in undocumented immigration in the United States in the twenty first century inspired nativist protests, especially in U.S. border states, about the need to crack down on illegal border crossings and engendered xenophobic rhetoric from immigration hardliners. Stereotypical images that are representative of the most hated aspects of groups and their members are transferred to an out-group, thus depicting the out-group as an enemy. Any semblance of likeness between an in-group and the out-group “must be denied and never permitted to enter our consciousness in order to keep our projections, externalization and displacement stable and the identity of ourselves cohesive” (Volkan, 1990, p. 88 as cited in Jeong, 2000, p. 68). As a result, in-group solidarity occurs at the expense of out-group hostility based on emotions like fear and insecurity, which may be engendered by nationalistic propaganda and the effect of negative stereotypical images of undocumented immigrants.

Anderson notes the crucial role “print capitalism” played in the mass production, circulation and dissemination of ideas and concepts about the nation. Through the printing of books, newspapers and other forms of media, readers were able to communicate and read in their own languages, and at the same time, became aware of the thousands or millions of others that could speak their language and “belonged” to the group. Through these processes and interactions, “print capitalism” was instrumental in cultivating a “national consciousness” among and within a polity. The printing and circulation of texts, thus facilitated a common discourse between group members who shared the same language the text was printed in. Learning from the importance of print media in producing discourses relevant to early conceptions of nationhood, it can be surmised that major American newspapers and magazines play a similarly important role in the mass production, reproduction and circulation of discourses on the national conscience of the United States. For this reason, they are very useful resources for analyzing the discourse on a nationally polarizing issue like undocumented immigration in this century and investigating the points of conflict within the discourse.

Periods of economic decline, particularly in the early 1990 and the 2000s, have historically coincided with an increase in nativist opposition to immigration (both legal and illegal) and an upsurge in xenophobic, anti-immigrant sentiment. As the United States continues to recover from the effects of the Great Recession, undocumented immigration has continued to be one of the major issues on the national agenda. This correlation suggests that, in addition to the elements of inter-group conflict discussed, economic components cannot be discounted in the analysis of the most salient drivers of

conflict emerging from the discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s. Economic self-interest provides theoretical analysis that shed light on these economic components. Economic self-interest attempts to explain the supposed threat of immigration to natives' economic well-being. For the purposes of this dissertation, economic self-interest theory will primarily focus on the supposed threat of undocumented immigrants to natives' economic well-being.

Economic self-interest focuses on class politics, where class is defined as “a sociological group in the sense that its members, by virtue of their common placement in the economic structure, share common interests” and class politics “occurs when the material goals and aspirations of different social groups conflict and produce cleavages” (Gusfield, 1963, pp. 14-17 as cited in Fetzer, 2000, p. 13). Fetzer (2000) notes that actual or threatened harm to one's economic interests then causes political attitudes in favor of preventing or alleviating such harm. With regard to undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s, the impact of the Recession on the labor market has impacted public attitudes towards undocumented immigrants. Opponents of immigration reform make the point that undocumented immigration adversely affects the native-born working class because undocumented immigrants are often willing to work for less pay and occupy positions demanding fewer skills. As a result, wages are lowered and working standards depreciate. In addition, fears that undocumented immigrants benefit from publicly funded services without paying taxes have triggered anti-immigrant rhetoric among right-wing political groups and fuel nativist opposition to undocumented immigration and immigration reform. Aviva Chomsky explores many of these economic

fears and concerns about undocumented immigrants in her book, *They Take Our Jobs* and challenges wide-held assumptions that undocumented immigrants are a drain on the American economy and contribute to poverty and inequality. As many of these fears and concerns pertain to the research question of this dissertation, analysis of the discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s provides an opportunity to critically assess them as well as Chomsky's findings.

Lastly, another important theory that shed light on sources of conflict within the discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s is contact theory. Fetzer (2000) defines this social theory, championed by Gordon Allport, as measuring attitudes towards foreigners "by focusing on the distribution of immigrants in one's neighborhood or region and on how many and what kind of personal contacts one has with newcomers" (Fetzer, 2000, p. 15). According to contact theory, the nature of the contact foreigners (in this case, undocumented immigrants) have with natives can impact the level and amount of prejudice citizens would have for the foreigner. For instance, if the initial contact with an undocumented immigrant is likely to increase prejudice, then "such contact boosts hostility because seeing a 'visible out-group member' brings "to mind a recollection of rumor, hearsay, tradition, or stereotype by which this out-group is known" (Fetzer, 2000, p. 15). Fetzer adds that once a member of an in-group forms a prejudiced view or opinion about a member of the out-group, then every additional encounter with the member of the group could strengthen "the adverse mental associations" that the prejudiced person already has and that the prejudiced people "are

also sensitized to perceive signs that will confirm their stereotypes” (Allport, 1979, p. 264 as cited in Fetzer, 2000, p. 16).

In analyzing the public discourse on undocumented immigration in the 2000s, it was useful to explore whether the distribution of undocumented immigrants in certain locations in the United States and the type of initial contact they have with American citizens present points of conflict that are manifested within the public discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s.

Chapter 3: Review of the Literature

Discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s is quite controversial and ripe for conflict because it is characterized by assumptions, clichés and stereotypes that are taken to be self-evident and commonly accepted (Chomsky, 2014). Rumbaut and Ewing (2006) note that “the misperception that the foreign-born, especially illegal immigrants, are responsible for higher crime rates is deeply rooted in American public opinion and is sustained by media anecdote and popular myth. But this perception is not supported empirically. In fact, it is refuted by the preponderance of scientific evidence.” Citing Hill (2008, p. 121), Dick (2011) writes that “people from countries as distinct as the Dominican Republic, Guatemala and Colombia become incorporated into a system of stereotypes developed to characterize Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans—for example., that Mexicans are lazy, stupid, criminal and corrupting” (Dick, 2011, p. 3). As is indicated in Hill’s finding, these stereotypes do not just serve as negative evaluative adjectives for Mexican-Americans and Mexican immigrants (legal and illegal), they also function as an index through which (undocumented) immigrants from other Latin American countries are perceived, based on the logic that they “look Mexican.”

In a complex process, which Zentella (1995) calls “chiquita-fication,” Mexican immigrants and other immigrants from Latin America are racialized in discourse as “Mexican immigrants,” a social category which has become conflated with “illegal alien” in the United States. Thus, the label “illegal alien” is imbued with “an image of the Mexican immigrant as a criminal Other” (Dick, 2011, p. 10). The seemingly self-evident

assumptions behind such labels and stereotypes betray the complex, evolving processes that define immigration to the United States. That many assumptions embedded within the discourse on undocumented immigration are taken to be self-evident illustrates the power of discourse in “naturalizing” certain statements as “common sense” or “fact” even if the statements are actually controversial (Schneider, 2013). The conflation of “Mexican immigrant” with “illegal alien/immigrant” did not happen in a vacuum or without consequence. Myths and stereotypes about (undocumented) immigrants and crime often provide the underpinnings for public policies and practices (Martinez, Jr & Valenzuela, 2006). In fact, there is a wealth of literature that provides historical context on the processes in which American immigration policy has criminalized and racialized Mexican and other Latin American immigrants (Coutin 2005, Coutin and Pease Chock, 1995; De Genova 2005; Hagan 1994; Stephen 2004). The significance of this criminalization and racialization will be discussed in subsequent paragraphs.

It is worth noting that the term “illegal alien/immigrant” was not exclusively used to portray an image of a Mexican immigrant as a criminalized Other in past immigration debates in the United States. At different periods in American history, immigration scholars have chronicled discourses on undocumented immigration that reflected the dominant ideas at the time as well as the internal and external factors that influenced those ideas. These discourses also featured the replacement of certain once-dominant ideas by other ideas. Donna Gabaccia’s research on the origins of the term “illegal immigrant” highlights the evolution of ideas surrounding undocumented immigration:

The earliest references are to “illegal immigration”, which referred to the movement of workers from China; they appeared immediately after passage of the 1882 Chinese exclusion. With the exclusion of all Asians and the restriction of southern and eastern European migrations in the 1920s, “illegal immigrant” became an intermittent fixture in the pages of *New York Times*, where it usually meant stowaways, persons who “jumped ship,” or the “immigrant bootleggers” who supposedly smuggled in workers and “immoral” women. Only after World War II (and a brief period when most stories about “illegal immigrants” focused on European Jews entering the British mandate in Palestine) did the term—understood by then to mean ‘wetbacks’ crossing the Rio Grande—become attached firmly to workers from Mexico. And only after 1965 did the term become common in a wide array of writings by journalists, scholars and Congressional representatives (Gabaccia, 2006, as cited in Chomsky, 2014, pp. 46-47).

From this excerpt, it is apparent that illegality (undocumentedness) has historically been attached to migrants excluded, restricted or discriminated against by law. It is also apparent that illegality has been used in different context while being attached to different types and classes of migrants. Dating from the earliest U.S immigration policies, “the construction of the category ‘illegal alien’ has relied on the racialization of certain groups excluded from ‘the real America’ by virtue of their deviance from a putative white normativity” (Dick, 2011, p. 8). The Chinese, for example, by virtue of the fact that they were nonwhite were “racially ineligible to citizenship” in 1882, and on that basis, were excluded from entering the United States as well (Chomsky, 2014, p. 33). The

racialization of certain groups, like the Chinese immigrants, and later, the Mexican immigrant (or people that “looked Mexican”), were motivated by a politics of national belonging which sought to distinguish between who is allowed to become a legitimate member of the “we the nation” and who is not (Dick, 2011, E36). To this effect, discourses to determine national membership in the United States have historically differentiated between immigrant groups, whereby “some are constructed as desirable, as enhancing ‘who we are’, and others are constructed as ‘undesirable,’ as a threat to U.S sovereignty and national identity” (Dick, 2011, E36). This differentiation process operated on the racialization of those deemed “undesirable” in a complex schema that aligned national membership with “racial hierarchies that construct whiteness as neutral and prototypically ‘American’ and nonwhiteness as fundamentally Other and unassimilable” (Dick, 2011, E36). Thus, race was an integral factor in according an individual with membership of the nation (citizenship), and notions about certain immigrant groups being incapable of assimilating into American culture were informed by race-based anti-immigration ideas and arguments.

As Dick (2011) points out, racialization facilitated the construction of Mexican and other Latin American immigrants as “foreign” and thus, “illegal immigrants.” Thus, inasmuch as the term “illegal immigrant/alien” denoted “foreignness,” it also functioned as a racial code in an incorporation regime whereby some immigrants were conferred with “above-table” belonging, while others were subjugated to “under-the-table” status, making them “exploitable” and “dispensable” (Hall 2004; Ngai 2004; Soysal 1994 as cited in Dick, 2011, E36). Those relegated to “under-the-table” status become exploitable

and dispensable through criminalization. Racialization is often accompanied by criminalization in this incorporation regime because “south-of-the-border” immigrants branded as “illegal aliens” tend to disproportionately come from Mexico and other Latin American countries. In this way, “illegal alien” as a category indirectly indexes Hispanics as a race (Dick, 2011, E50). Chomsky provides more insight into the conflation of “illegal alien” with Mexican or Hispanic immigrants and the link between racialization and criminalization: “as immigration charges began to take up more of the federal crime caseload, it meant the courts were prosecuting and convicting more and more Latinos. Hispanics made up more than half of those arrested on federal charges in 2011.” (Chomsky, 2014, p. 105).

Massey and Durand (2003) find that the racialization and criminalization of undocumented immigrants from Mexico and Latin America has resulted in a “politics of contradiction,” whereby continued demand for their labor in the 2000s in certain U.S. industries (like meatpacking and agriculture that have historically hired undocumented immigrants) has attracted more undocumented workers to these jobs in an era when federal immigration policy has increasingly criminalized illegal immigration and bolstered enforcement on and within the country’s borders.

The racialization and criminalization of immigration tie into other aspects of the immigration debate in the United States. The view that (undocumented) immigrants threaten national identity and societal cohesion, especially “newcomers whose perceived ethnic distinctiveness challenges the assimilative capacity of the host societies” is rooted in racial prejudices that have historically weighed heavily in American immigration

debates (d'Appollonia, 2012). Such racial prejudices were part of the culturally based concerns that animated anti-immigrant sentiment and rhetoric, and thus, fuelling the perception that immigration threatened national unity and security. Samuel Huntington, warning against Hispanic and Asian migration to the United States in *Who Are We?: The Challenges to America's National Identity*, claimed that "America's third major wave of immigration that began in the 1960s brought to America people from Latin America and Asia rather than Europe as previous waves did. The culture and values of their countries of origin often differ substantially from those prevalent in America...Cultural America is under siege" (Huntington, 2004, as cited in d'Appollonia, 2012, p. 20). Huntington argued that this difference in cultures and values would result in a "clash of civilizations" that would make it difficult for these immigrants to assimilate into their host societies, creating conditions that threaten social cohesion and national identity. In this vein, Huntington (2004) argued that Mexican immigration to the United States posed a significant threat to the country's national identity.

Yet, Huntington's argument oversimplifies the complexity of the assimilative processes that have helped shaped American culture through foreign migration. Even southern European immigrants were once perceived by nativists as threats whose migration to the United States should be restricted, lest American cities be infiltrated with their "Little Italys", "Bohemian Hills" and "Ghettos" (McKearin & McKearin, 1941). Described as "the scum of the earth," the off-scouring of Europe," "the criminal refuse of the old world," "reeking with disease and immorality," early European migrants from southern Europe were ascribed similar constructions and perceptions of threat and

foreignness to American nationhood as Huntington applies to Mexican and Latin American immigrants (McKearin & McKearin, 1941). Huntington's argument also ignores that for many Mexican migrants, "the border crossed them" as the United States historically annexed parts of Mexico in the American southwest during the Treaty of Guadeloupe Hidalgo in 1648. This historical fact underscores the legacy and contribution of Mexican culture to the American southwest and its role in helping to shape American nationhood and cultural identity. In addition, it offers a rebuttal to Huntington's seemingly taken-for-granted assumption that American cultural identity is exclusive from the Hispanic influences that helped to shape and define it.

Similarly, Peter Brimelow (1996) argued in *Alien Nation: Common Sense about America's Immigration Disaster* that the race and culture of immigrants to the United States in the post-1965 period pose a serious threat to the nation. He goes as far as to predict "America's assisted suicide" should immigration trends continue. Huntington and Brimelow's arguments found expression in nativist and other anti-immigrant groups call for the restriction of immigration to the United States. For instance, Judis (2006) notes that, "...longtime observers of Arizona politics confirm that a concern with 'Mexicanization' lies at the heart of their opposition to illegal immigration." (Judis, 2006).

While the racial and ethnic makeup of immigrants posed a major concern among nativists and restrictionists with regard to the preservation of national identity and state sovereignty, the quality of immigrants has been another area of concern. D'Appollonia writes that, during the nineteenth century, immigrants "were blamed for all the perceived

dysfunction of American society, such as political corruption, urban expansion and related issues (noise, traffic, crime and pollution), delinquency, alcoholism, and diseases..” (d’Appollonia, 2012, p. 32). Some of these views have crystallized into stereotypes that persist in today’s discourse on undocumented immigration, such as the perception that “Mexicans are lazy, vulgar, criminal and corrupting” (Hill, 2008, p. 121). Chomsky (2007) explains the role of these stereotypes in fomenting what she calls economic ‘myths’ about undocumented immigrants, like “Immigrants take American jobs,” “Immigrants don’t pay taxes,” and “Immigrants are a drain on the economy” in her book, *“They Take Our Jobs! And 20 other myths about immigration”*

According to d’Appollonia (2012), the events of September 11, 2001 have transformed pre-existing concerns about immigration (on national identity, sovereignty, social order and economic prosperity) into immigrant-related security fears. Tracing the framing of immigration as a security issue in the United States to the late 1980s and early 1990s, she argues that immigration-related concerns on national identity, sovereignty and social order had engendered feelings of national insecurity even before 9/11. Her assertion is corroborated by notable events like Proposition 187, (which gained national attention through efforts to restrict illegal immigration by denying social services like non-emergency healthcare and public education to undocumented immigrants in California in 1994), the increased militarization of the southern border with Mexico (Operation Gatekeeper (1994)/ Operation Hold The Line (1993)), and the resulting reclassification of trans-border activities (like illegal immigration and drug trafficking) as security problems.

The national hysteria that gripped the United States after 9/11 helped to forge implicit associations between immigration and insecurity that have continued to endure well into the 2000s (d'Appollonia, 2012, p.15). Pre-existing insecurities amplified into national fears, and this shift was evident in the policies the Bush administration pursued and the restructuring of immigration affairs in the aftermath of 9/11. The fight against terrorism, termed the War on Terror by the Bush administration, heralded an era where immigration affairs were subsumed into the Department of Homeland Security while restrictive immigration policies focused on terrorism. These associations created a seemingly obvious link between immigration and terrorism, which d'Appollonia sums up in this analogy: "immigrants are foreigners and pose a threat; terrorists are foreigners and pose a threat as well; thus any immigrant may be a terrorist, and consequently the best way to prevent terrorism is to be tough in dealing with immigrants. (d'Appollonia, 2012, pp.15-16). This conflation of immigration with terrorism has been the bedrock upon which U.S. immigration policies adopting a "worst-case" scenario approach which justifies a blanket strategy having been pursued for the last decade (d'Appollonia, 2012, p. 16).

De la Garza (2006) provides more analysis about the impact of conflating immigration with terrorism, arguing that the resulting changes from the events of 9/11 have reshaped the immigration debate in the United States. He claims that the debate is now more narrowly focused on illegal immigration rather than on immigration and immigrants per se because designating immigration issues to the then-newly created Department of Homeland Security (DHS) changed how undocumented migration was

perceived and addressed. On the one hand, the creation of DHS placed a renewed emphasis on securing the country's borders from terrorism and terrorist activity. Yet, border security also meant preventing undocumented immigration and, in effect, tying public support of counter-terrorism measures to an expanded support for efforts aimed toward curbing undocumented immigration. Thus, insofar as the Department of Homeland Security's agenda conflated immigration and anti-terrorism issues, public sentiment for undocumented immigrants would correspond with a lower tolerance (de la Garza, 2006). In addition, de la Garza cites the tenuous link between security and immigration issues to contest the inferential linkage between immigration and terrorism. Highlighting that the 9/11 perpetrators entered the country as tourists and students, not immigrants, de la Garza states that:

the immigration debate could be sharpened and advanced by focusing on the extremely low probability that terrorists will try to enter the country as undocumented immigrants, an approach they are unlikely to engage in because it is such a high risk enterprise for the individuals involved, as compared to entering as commercial travelers, tourists or students, avenues that entail virtually no risk and are widely available to anyone who meets minimal requirements. In other words, to develop productive approaches for dealing with undocumented immigration we must begin by disassociating it from the War on Terror (de la Garza, 2006).

De la Garza's proposal that the development of productive approaches for dealing with undocumented immigration should be predicated upon dissociating the phenomenon from

the War on Terror sheds light on the implicit construction of undocumented immigrants as threats to the security of the nation in the discourse, which stirs fear and hostility towards them among citizens. In fact, “migrant phobia has less to do with ascertainable facts about immigration than with unarticulated fears that immigrants are threatening national integrity and societal security” (d’Appollonia, 2012, p. 47).

Massey & Pren (2012) document how certain metaphors and characterizations have been used by the American media and politicians to effectively construct migrants as threats to the nation. Citing Santa Ana (2002), they note that Latino immigration was negatively portrayed as a “crisis” to the nation, and the usage of marine metaphors to augment this crisis, as in, “‘a rising tide’ or a ‘tidal wave’ that was poised to ‘inundate’ the United States and ‘drown’ its culture while ‘flooding’ American society with unwanted foreigners,” typified the “Latino threat” narrative in the news media as illegal immigration from Latin America to the United States increased from 1965 through the late 1970s and 1980s (Massey & Pren, 2012, pp. 5-6).

In addition to the usage of marine metaphors, there was increasing usage of “invasion” and “war” rhetoric by the American media and immigration officials in reference to rising Latino illegal immigration during this time period (Nevins 2001; Chavez 2008 as cited in Massey & Pren, 2012). Politicians played a role in feeding into this “Latino threat” narrative, with then-U.S. President Ronald Reagan framing illegal immigration as an issue of “national security” in a 1986 speech briefing the nation that “terrorists and subversives are just two days driving time from [the border crossing at] Harlingen, Texas” (Kamen 1990, as cited in Massey & Pren, 2012, p. 7). Note Reagan’s

reference to “terrorists” in making the case that illegal immigration is a “national security issue.”

According to Massey & Pren (2012), the cumulative effect of the media, immigration officials and politicians’ engagement in the “Latino threat” narrative was a transformation of public opinion on Mexican migrants, from “what had been a largely invisible circulation of innocuous workers into a yearly and highly visible violation of American sovereignty by hostile aliens who were increasingly framed as invaders and criminals.” (Massey & Pren, 2012, p. 8).

Massey & Pren (2012) note that the rise of the “Latino threat” narrative through the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s coincided with a period of increasing income inequality, which sparked growing anti-immigrant sentiment in the United States. This period also coincided with the passage of increasingly restrictive immigration bills (15 passed between 1965 and 2010) by Congress and an emphasis on immigration enforcement policies, which would continue into the 2000s. The buildup of restrictive immigration legislation and enforcement operations heralded an era of increased border apprehensions and the detention of thousands of migrants. Armed with the statistics of these apprehensions and detentions, politicians and other powerful interests that directly or indirectly benefit from anti-immigration and stringent enforcement policies rile up public opinion, resulting in more anti-immigrant sentiment and low tolerance among the general public for undocumented immigrants. These conditions lead to an outcry for more draconian immigration laws and enforcement operations, which result in even more

apprehensions in a vicious cycle that reinforces the “Latino threat” narrative (Massey & Pren, 2012, p. 9).

Scholarship on immigration in the United States has mostly focused on the nation-state as the main level of analysis. This is understandable, after all, because illegal immigration is an international problem that affects countries that migrants migrate from and those that they migrate to. Indeed, addressing the problems and concerns posed by international migration would likely require an international collaborative effort. Moreover, immigration is a socially constructed phenomenon by which countries express their sovereignty by delineating a national “we” allowed entry and membership within their borders from those excluded outside these borders. Yet, in the United States, subnational actors like states, counties, cities, communities and their local governments play a crucial role in the immigration debate too. The United States Constitution may largely delegate immigration matters in the jurisdiction of the federal government, but according to the National Research Council, to states like California that have a large population of undocumented immigrants, illegal immigration comes at a cost, with undocumented immigrants costing citizens over \$1,000 per family. (de la Garza, 2006). Moreover, while the federal government may benefit from receiving more in taxes and social security than the cost of the public services it provides, local governments “lose the most since the cost of the services they provide exceed the taxes they receive, which creates problems that legitimately concern citizens and legal residents.” (de la Garza, 2006).

As a result, there is a potential for conflict between the federal government and local governments that has significant implications for the implementation of immigration policy and on the immigration debate. In *The Grassroots Reconfiguration of U.S. Immigration Policy*, Wells (2004) notes that the multi-faceted, decentralized and complex structure of the U.S. nation-state has resulted in ambiguous, contradictory responses wherein “despite the increasing constriction of immigrants’ rights at the federal level, local responses have been much more varied, countering, compensating for, even transforming policies originating from the national core” (Wells, 2004). Wells adds that “although in theory the authority to make and enforce immigration policy is generally reserved to the federal level, in practice the status and treatment of unauthorized immigrants are significantly dependent on the political-economic features of local communities and the concerns and strategies of local actors.” (Wells, 2004).

Wells’ assertion is relevant in contemporary discourse on undocumented immigration when one considers that 26 states filed a lawsuit against the Obama administration in January, 2015 for planning to provide temporary relief to millions of people living in the country illegally, arguing that they have to “bear the burden” of undocumented immigration by paying for public education for undocumented immigrant children and having to provide “uncompensated” emergency care for undocumented immigrants who do not have health insurance and are ineligible for the Affordable Healthcare Act (ACA).

Dick’s (2011) piece on the passage of an ordinance in the small town of Hazleton, Pennsylvania, in 2006, that would punish town employers and landlords for hiring or

renting property to undocumented immigrants provides more examples of the uneasy tension between the federal government and local governments in enforcing immigration law. In this instance, a town's local government is attempting to enforce immigration law within the broader framework of federal code while also trying to expand federal law to include provisions that would legislate locally relevant types of interaction through "citation of federal code and iconic replication of that code" (Dick, 2011, E38).

On the one hand, proponents of the ordinance claimed that it was merely legislation providing teeth to the enforcement of federal law. Yet opponents like the American Civil Liberties Union argued that the ordinance was pre-empted by federal law, violated several anti-discrimination laws and failed to provide parties potentially harmed by the law with due process protections. The Hazleton ordinance received national attention and became a blueprint for other municipalities across the country looking to craft locally restrictive, anti-immigrant legislation. Even though the ordinance was ruled unconstitutional by a federal judge in 2007, Dick's paper demonstrated that while state and municipal legislation on immigration may not be able to change the formal terms of federal policy, they can create the undercurrent for policy changes on immigration at the federal level (as California's Proposition 187, a state law imposing restrictions on access to social services for undocumented immigrants, helped inspire political support for the Illegal Immigration Reform and Reform Act (IIRIRA) in 1996).

While the Hazleton ordinance represented attempts on the local level to reinforce and replicate restrictions on undocumented immigrants at the federal level, there is research on local attempts to restore to undocumented immigrants rights and social

services denied them at the federal level. Wells (2004) chronicles The Sanctuary Movement of the early 1980s, involving religious organizations and local governments declaring themselves domains of sanctuary from federal immigration authorities for undocumented Central American immigrants. Municipalities like Los Angeles, Chicago, Seattle and St. Paul became “cities of refuge” and states like New York and New Mexico passed sanctuary resolutions to provide protections to undocumented immigrants from laws that they perceived as “unjust and unduly harsh.” Today, “sanctuary cities” are very much a part of the public discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States. While Congress’ failure to pass immigration reform has emboldened towns like Hazleton and states like Arizona to push for local immigrant restriction legislation, cities like San Francisco have opted to do the opposite, developing policies and infrastructure that integrate undocumented immigrants into communities while forbidding law enforcement to inquire about immigration status (Degnen 2007, as cited in Dick, 2011, E39).

In fact, *Cities for Action*, a coalition of over 100 municipalities seeking immigration action that would integrate undocumented immigrants into communities within these municipalities has backed the Obama administration’s plan to allow millions of undocumented immigrants to stay in the country even as 26 states have filed suit against the federal government in opposition. These events illustrate how divisive and complicated the immigration debate is in the United States at the different levels of government and the role of politics in exacerbating these divisions and complexities.

The tension between the state and subnational actors over immigration policy raises questions like who is permitted to inhabit sovereign-nation state territory and who

has the administrative power to make such decisions (Dick, 2011, E36). This tension poses a challenge to conventional associations of citizenship and the privileges that come with this citizenship to the state. Will citizenship continue to be defined by and limited by membership to the nation-state or will local and municipal governments be part of a trend that challenges how citizenship is defined and conceptualized? These are essential socio-political considerations about how the role of government and immigration (legal and illegal) will shape the identity of the United States in the 21st century and beyond.

The U.S. Census Bureau estimated that over 80 percent of the foreign-born population in the United States were from Latin America and Asia in 2009 and that by 2050, Hispanics will increase from 12.6 percent to 24.4 percent and the Asian population will rise from 3.8 percent to 8 percent of the total population. While Caucasians will still represent a large, albeit reduced proportion, of the majority of all other ethnic groups (72.1 percent, compared to 81 percent in 2000), white nationalists have expressed fear of losing their cultural identity. How will these demographic changes, coupled with the multi-layered, complex structure of the U.S. nation-state shape the United States politically, economically, socially and culturally as well as U.S. immigration policy and the immigration debate? It seems apparent that immigration, and for that matter, undocumented immigration, will continue to be a hot topic in the United States, the so-called nation of immigrants for years to come.

Much has been written on undocumented immigration in the United States. This dissertation aims to contribute to this extensively rich literature on the topic by focusing on the discourse on the phenomenon captured through newspapers, magazines, political

speeches and legal perspectives. Coverage of the discourse in these forms is important because such sources of data are not just receptacles or reservoirs of discourse on undocumented immigration but the discourse captured within them are constitutive parts of the immigration debate in the United States.

Winslade and Monk (2000) explain the function of language as a precondition for thought, citing Wittgenstein's claim that "the way we think and the concepts and categories we use when we think are provided for us in the language or discourse that existed before we entered into it" (Winslade and Monk, 2000, p. 39). In this sense, news sources, political speeches and legal texts, in addition to being constitutive of the discourse on undocumented immigration, also produce subjective human experience by establishing the frames through which discourse on undocumented immigration and other related topics are engaged.

Chapter 4: Methodology

In order to investigate the research question--what does the discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s reveal about the most salient drivers of conflict related to immigration? – I employed qualitative discourse analysis as a methodology. Qualitative discourse analysis is well suited for investigating the research problem because as a method of qualitative research geared towards studying what and how people communicate, it aims “to show how language is instrumental in constructing social reality and to challenge this social reality through deconstruction” (Wodak & Krzyzanowski, 2008, p. 33). According to Florian Schneider, a social scientist and Discourse Analysis scholar, this process of deconstruction can be likened to conducting a forensic analysis in which discourse analysts take apart the communication process within the discourse and examine the various “building blocks” inside to figure out how they work (Schneider, 2013). In conducting Discourse Analysis on the public discourse on undocumented immigration in the 2000s, the dissertation examined various texts that constitute the discourse, identified themes and concepts within the texts that expose points of conflict within the discourse, interrogated the “building blocks” and processes behind their construction and determined how these building blocks work to shape what is said and written about undocumented immigration.

The collection of texts is fundamental in conducting discourse analysis. Hardy (2001) underlines the crucial role texts play in discourse analysis by noting that, “discourse analysis is thus interested in ascertaining the constructive effects of discourse through the structured and systematic study of text.” (Hardy, 2001, as cited by Phillips &

Hardy, 2012). Texts are the “building blocks” of discourse. Through texts, we learn about the processes that facilitated the construction of social meaning, the histories associated with these processes as well as the participants and institutions involved with the production of the texts. Texts can also reveal information about structures and power relations that contribute to our understanding of how social reality is created and shaped by discourse (Kress, 1995, p. 122, as cited by Phillips & Hardy, 2012). By studying pieces of texts, discourse analysts aim to investigate the relationship between discourse and social reality by extracting the meaning behind them (Phillips & Hardy, 2012). The meaningfulness of a piece of text is contingent on a discourse analyst’s ability to interconnect them with other texts, extract them from various discourses and understand how they are produced, disseminated and utilized (Phillips & Brown, 1993 as cited by Phillips & Hardy, 2012).

Another important component of discourse analysis is context. Context is relevant because discourses do not exist by themselves, but as part of other discourses that are shared and produced as a result of communication between social groups and the complex societal structures the discourses are embedded in. Leading discourse analysts like Fairclough & Wodak (1997) stress the significance of context in the analysis of discourse, arguing that “discourse is not produced without context and cannot be understood without taking context into consideration...discourses are always connected to other discourses which were produced earlier, as well as those which are produced synchronically and subsequently” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 277, as cited in Phillips & Hardy, 2012). In a nutshell, by collecting and analyzing text that captures the discourse

on undocumented immigration in the 2000s and exploring the various contexts involved in the production of the texts and the meaning-making processes associated with them, the aim of the dissertation was to gain a better understanding of the most salient drivers of conflict within the discourse.

The dissertation focused on collecting secondary data from a wide range of sources, obtained digitally and in hard copy. The secondary data was intended to produce a corpus of text that was reflective and representative of the public discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States from 2000 to 2014. The collection of secondary data inevitably brought up the question of corpus size. Based on the research question, there was no easy answer to determine how large the corpus should be or how much corpus size mattered to the research. Rather than fixating on how large or small the corpus should be, the researcher decided to focus on building a corpus that reflected the general discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States within the specified time frame.

A corpus reflective of a generalized sample of public discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States is representative and balanced (Xiao, 2010).

Representativeness in the creation of a corpus refers to “the extent to which a sample includes the full range of variability in a population” (Biber, 1993, p. 243 as cited in Xiao, 2010, p. 149). With respect to the discourse on undocumented immigration, a corpus reflective of this “full range of variability in a population” would encompass the different types of discourse that illustrate the breadth and depth of the discourse in the United States in the 2000s, such as news items, political and legal discourse.

Building a corpus intended to reflect a generalized sample of public discourse ought not only to be representative but also balanced (Xiao, 2010). Xiao (2010) advises that this sort of corpus “cover, proportionally, as many text types as possible so that the corpus is maximally representative of the language or language variety it is supposed to represent” (Xiao, 2010, p. 150). To achieve representativeness and balance in the corpus, secondary data from a wide range of source material covering news, political and legal discourse on undocumented immigration was acquired. These included content from newspapers, magazines, political speeches, legal commentary, poll data and reports from news media and government reports that capture the discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States from 2000 to 2014.

Major newspapers like the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today* and *Los Angeles Times* are suitable sources because they provided adequate coverage and commentary on the public discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States. In addition, such major, reputable newspapers were based in cities where large, foreign-born populations are located and periodically feature opinion-editorials, news and reports on political activity, statements by politicians, polls and surveys about the discourse on undocumented immigration. High-circulation newspapers, like those listed and major magazines like *Time* and the *New Yorker* were invaluable resources because they provided the researcher with a pulse for the most dominant discourses in the public square and the most relevant issues being covered in the mainstream American media. Also, the researcher realized that major newspapers and magazines are of great utility to social science research not only because of their capacity

to mass produce and disseminate socially constructed discourse but because this “dissemination to large audiences enhances the constitutive effect of discourse-its power, that is, to shape widely shared constructions of reality.” (Wodak & Krzyzanowski, 2008, p. 32).

To supplement material from newspapers and magazines, the dissertation drew from media-related polls, surveys and reports covering public discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s. These include *CNN*, *Gallup*, *Fox News*, the *Southern Poverty Law Center* and *Pew Research Center*. Media polls and surveys were quite useful in documenting public opinion and attitudes towards undocumented immigration. Reports, polls and surveys from government agencies, such as census data and other pertinent information about undocumented immigration from the Census Bureau, Department of Homeland Security and the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (USICE) were collected for reference purposes and as a counterbalance to mitigate the potential bias from media-related polls and surveys. As politicians and journalistic material on undocumented immigration often reference results and statistics from census data, USICE and various news media, their utility, both for research purposes and as tools for gauging public discourse were a much-needed resource for research.

The corpus-building process began with the identification of material that potentially constitutes data for the research, otherwise known as the “universe of possible texts” (Titscher et al, 2000, p. 33 as cited in Wodak & Krzyzanowski, 2008, p. 35). Using the main research question as a guide, the “universe of possible texts” included texts with

a variation and combination of certain keywords and phrases that pertain to the discourse on undocumented immigration in the US in the 2000s, like “unauthorized immigrant/immigration,” “undocumented immigrant/immigration,” “illegal immigrant/immigration,” “alien,” “undocumented workers,” “immigration reform,” “border,” “security,” “visa,” “overstay,” “jobs,” “taxes,” “welfare,” “free,” “public services,” “handouts,” “benefits,” “health,” “education.”

Once such material had been identified, the researcher used a form of sampling called cyclical corpus-building to aid in the collection of texts for analysis (see Figure 1). In cyclical corpus-building, “the idea here is that you begin by selecting a small but relevant and homogenous corpus, analyze it and on the basis of your findings select again.” (Bauer and Aarts, 2000, p.31 as cited in Wodak & Krzyzanowski, 2008, p. 35). Based on the researcher’s findings, more texts are selected and added to the corpus until new data no longer yields up new representations or until the researcher discovers that what he or she finds is more of the same. At that point, the corpus is said to have reached “saturation”.

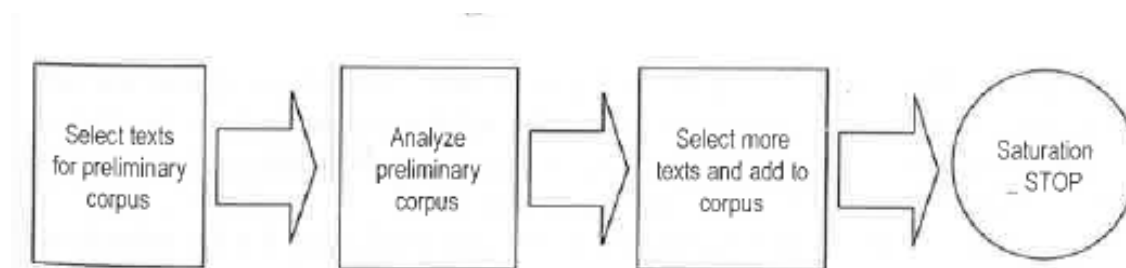


Figure 1. Cyclical corpus-building. (Bauer and Aarts, 2000, as cited in Wodak, 2008).

Following this procedure, a cyclical process, informed by the “universe of possible texts” listed was used to collect a small corpus of articles, published from 2004-

2014, that provided a myriad of opinions on whether undocumented immigrants should receive legal status in the United States and be given a pathway to American citizenship. Based on the researcher's findings in the small corpus, more texts were selected and added until the researcher determined the corpus to reflect a representative, balanced sample of the discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s.

After data collection, the researcher followed some essential steps that precede the preparation of data for discourse analysis. For every source material, the researcher investigated the economic, political and legal background, authorship, institutional environment, production process, the demographics and lifestyles of the intended audience and the audience's literary practices (Wodak & Krzyzanowski, 2008, p. 33). In addition, the researcher documented the medium in which each source material appeared and the genre it belonged to. All these steps are requisite in establishing context and exploring the production process behind each source material so that the researcher can better understand how the context and production process frame the meaning of the text extracted from each source material (Schneider, 2013). After this process, the corpus was prepared for data analysis.

To conduct data analysis, NVivo was used because it is software specifically designed for qualitative researchers working with text-based information. The software is best suited for qualitative discourse analysis because it comes with built-in coding mechanisms that can be customized to perform nuanced analyses on large and small pieces of data. In order to perform data analysis on NVivo, all articles in the corpus had to be converted to digital formats. Thus, all hard copies of newspaper and magazine text

were digitized for analysis on NVivo. As most of the source material used for the research appeared in both digital and hardcopy formats or were already digitized on the Internet, importing them to NVivo for data analysis was a relatively easy task. Once all articles were imported as files or documents into the NVivo program, the next task was to organize the data in a manner that enabled the researcher to utilize the software's functions and capabilities to conduct a thorough analysis of the data.

In keeping with the concept of a corpus that was representative and balanced of the discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s, the researcher initially created three different folders within the NVivo program, each designated for U.S. news items, political discourse and legal discourse respectively. Within the folder for U.S. news items, two folders were created, one for news articles from newspapers and the other for articles from magazines. The newspaper items comprised of editorials, letters to the editor, reports, opinion-editorials, and commentaries that provided insight on contemporary discourse on undocumented immigration from newspapers circulated on a nationwide-scale like the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *USA Today* and major regional newspapers like the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Miami Herald*. The magazine articles largely comprised of various political opinions about undocumented immigration and immigration as a whole from *The New Republic*, *National Review*, *American Spectator*, *Weekly Standard*, *Time*, *New Yorker*.

The folder created for political discourse contained digitized transcripts of various debates on CNN and Fox News about topics such as border security and enforcement,

deportation and immigration reform. The political discourse folder also contained articles with statements and opinions made by or attributed to political figures and material covering Congressional deliberations on immigration reform and politically relevant aspects of the discourse such as legalization, deportation, border security and enforcement from many of the newspapers and magazines previously mentioned.

Within the folder created for legal discourse, there were opinion-editorials, letters to the editor and statements made by legal professionals weighing in on immigration reform and issues concerned with the legal side of the discourse like the criminalization of immigration and enforcement of immigration law. The folder also contained the *Arizona v United States* legal case on immigration (SB 1070) and media reports over other relevant immigration cases like *United States v. Texas* (the lawsuit lodged by Texas and several other states against the Obama administration's executive actions on immigration).

In sum, the corpus comprised of 60 newspaper articles, 27 magazine articles and 25 articles composed of a mixture of NBC news reports, CNN and Fox News interviews and reports, and Pew Research Center and Gallup polls intended as supplemental data for the magazine and newspaper articles. A separate folder was created for government documents like Census Bureau Data, Department of Homeland Security statistics and reports on deportations and detentions and another created to store reports and data from Non-Governmental Organizations involved with immigration policy and research like the American Immigration Council, Center for Immigration Studies, Amnesty International, Federation for American Immigration Reform and the Immigration Policy Center.

After importing the data into the NVivo software and dividing up the data into respective folders, the researcher began analysis of the data. Data analysis was performed through coding, defined as “the assignment of attributes to specific units of analysis, such as paragraphs, sentences or individual words” (Schneider, 2013). Coding contributes to data analysis in several ways. The coding process compels the researcher to ask important questions like: What is this piece of text or discourse strand about? Is it about more than one thing? How does it help me answer my research question? Coding enables the researcher to collect all the material about a theme or topic in one place so that he or she can observe patterns, contradictions or derive new hypotheses from their findings. The use of software like NVivo allows a researcher to cross-reference and cross-examine connections between themes, which contribute to a greater understanding of a problem or issue.

Data analysis was conducted through analytical coding. This means that the corpus was organized by themes and related topics through the creation of nodes in NVivo. Once this task has been completed, the researcher reviews the content of the nodes to examine what the content is really about, how this content relates to the research question and then deduces meanings and new ideas about the data. Before the actual process of coding, the researcher established coding categories that would help organize the data into the major themes and topics concerned with the discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s. These coding categories were determined by identifying five major points of tension within mainstream discourse about undocumented immigration. The five identified major points of tension were the tension

between reward and punishment for undocumented immigrants, the tension between what undocumented immigrants contribute to society and how much they benefit from welfare and public services, the tension between border security and the demand for undocumented labor, the tension between preserving American cultural identity and assimilating undocumented immigrants and the tension between the United States image as a country of immigrants and an immigration policy that has increasingly criminalized immigration in the 2000s.

From these five major points of tension within the discourse, the researcher picked out key themes and related topics that would represent starting coding categories. These key themes included “Border Security,” “Enforcement,” “Taxes & Public Benefits,” “Legalization,” “Labor & Employment,” “Crime” and “Culture.” From these key themes, related topics such as “Terrorism,” “Citizenship,” “Identity,” “Economic Downturn,” “Law Enforcement,” and “Amnesty” were identified. Content about these key themes and related topics were collected and organized through nodes in the NVivo software. In these nodes, related material that evoke a certain theme or provide more insight about the theme are gathered in one place so that a user can investigate emerging patterns and ideas. The researcher created nodes that corresponded with each key theme and related topic. Parent nodes were created for key themes, and related topics were classified under the corresponding themes as child nodes. For example, in the case of a node created for “Culture,” one of the key themes identified, would represent a “parent node” and a related topic like “cultural identity” would represent the “child node.” Thus,

“Culture” was designated as a main category or parent node and related topics were designated as subcategories through child nodes.

After creating the nodes, the researcher’s task was to read through the text to find words, phrases, paragraphs and other literary devices that elicited the themes already identified. In order to highlight text and code them for themes, all articles had to be converted to PDF or Microsoft Word document format in NVivo. The themes that were not elicited were noted and jotted down. In the course of reading the text, the researcher encountered certain themes that were either quite broad or brought up several different topics that were related to other themes. Thus, the researcher had to reconstruct some coding categories by breaking them down into sub-categories or by creating new themes. New sub-categories and themes were jotted down and revisions were made within the NVivo program to reflect these changes. This review process was repeated after reading each article until the researcher was able to compile a final list of coding categories. In addition to highlighting text and coding them for pre-determined and newly identified themes, the researcher kept memos of notes and observations for the articles.

Coding the text was a quite laborious task. One word, sentence or paragraph, for example, could tie into several coding categories and themes and the researcher was required sometimes to analyze the piece of text in a vacuum, within a larger sentence structure or context and within the overall article. As the researcher had not had any prior experience with qualitative data analysis software like NVivo, hours away from performing actual data analysis had to be dedicated to learning the software and figuring out how to best utilize its customizations to perform analysis.

After preparing the data for analysis and completing coding of the text, the number of themes and related topics had significantly increased. Border Security was, unsurprisingly, one of the most referenced themes in the text, as evidenced by the high volume of discourse strands coded for this theme. Enforcement was also referenced and coded for throughout much of the text, but as the topic tended to be largely discussed within the bigger issue of border security, the researcher created a node for it within the node for Border Security. Labor & Employment issues received extensive coverage throughout the text, which was to be expected because the demand for cheap labor in the United States is one of the driving forces behind undocumented immigration and this demand has aroused concern among anti-immigrant advocates about the illegal hire of undocumented workers and the loss of American jobs to them. Within this node, the researcher created nodes for other topics related to the labor and employment of undocumented immigrants that were coded for within the text. These included exploitation of undocumented labor, skilled vs unskilled labor, the impact of economic downturn on labor demands and anti-immigrant sentiment and functionalization of undocumented workers. Functionalization occurs when social actors are referred to in terms of what they do (Sahragard & Davatgarzadeh, 2010). The researcher noticed widespread descriptions and references to undocumented immigrants in terms of their work and how much this work would boost the American economy as part of arguments made in support of comprehensive immigration reform. Thus, the functionalization of undocumented immigrants was a node that was added to the overall theme of Labor & Employment later in the coding process.

The criminality of undocumented immigrants is one of the more controversial aspects of the discourse on undocumented immigration and that reflected in the pervasiveness of crime as a theme in the corpus during coding. The researcher created a node for crime, along with nodes for topics related to the crime theme, such as amnesty, sanctuary cities, law enforcement and terrorism. Linked with the perceived criminality of undocumented immigrants is the perception among anti-immigrant groups that they do not pay taxes and freeload on public programs, thus becoming a drain on society and endangering the social safety net. As a result, a node was created for “Taxes & Public Benefits,” with two subordinate nodes created entitled “Contribution to U.S economy” and “Payment of Taxes.”

The creation of a node for “Culture” was informed by culturally based arguments made by nativists and the far-right wing of the Republican Party opposed to illegal immigration. As the researcher went through the corpus, more aspects of the culturally themed arguments were noted, particularly in the magazine articles. Nodes were created for these different aspects and coded for within the corpus. Within the “Culture” node, other nodes were created for these aspects. These included “Nativism,” “Identity,” “Assimilation,” “Social Fabric,” “Race,” and “Multiculturalism.” Under the “Social Fabric” node, “Speaking English” and “Inclusion” were created as nodes because of restrictionists’ argument that undocumented immigrants’ lack of proficiency to speak English threatened the social fabric. Inclusion was created as a node under the “Social Fabric” node because pro and anti-immigration reform views prioritized the capacity of

undocumented immigrants to be integrated into society in their arguments and the role of legislation in facilitating this integration.

Going through the corpus and coding for the themes also helped to shed light on theoretical perspectives relevant to the analysis of the discourse. The corpus was riddled with social constructions like nationalism, sovereignty and race. So the researcher created a parent node, entitled “Social Constructionism” and child nodes that represented each of the previously mentioned social construction and coded for them within the text. Issues about race continue to animate the discourse, especially because immigration crimes are highly racialized and because the word “Hispanics” sometimes functioned as a synecdoche for “undocumented immigrant” in the text. Thus, the researcher created nodes for “Hispanic” and “Race.”

Nodes were also created for recurring phrases and terms such as “living in the shadows,” “going to the back of the line,” “coming to America the right way” because the researcher noted their widespread use throughout the corpus and their relevance to the discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States.

Concepts like the dehumanization of undocumented immigrants and the use of terms and characterizations that construct them as threats were noteworthy parts of the discourse and provided insight into the in-group versus out-group dynamics at play in the discourse. Under the parent node “in-group vs out-group dynamics,” child nodes for dehumanization and fear were created and coded for to highlight the different strategies used in discourse to construct undocumented immigrants as an “other” distinct from

members of the in-group and the negative characterizations of them designed to induce fear and hatred of them by the in-group.

An advantage of using the NVivo software for coding rather than coding manually was that the software enabled coding at multiple nodes (co-occurring nodes). This functionality was useful not only because several of the identified themes within the discourse are connected, but also because this functionality enabled the researcher to perform other tasks during analysis like performing queries that combine different combinations from co-occurring nodes, such as looking up the results of all content in newspaper articles coded at nodes with related themes like Crime and Border Security.

After the researcher had finished coding each article, the macro features of the text were examined. During this examination, the researcher attempted to uncover whether there were sections of the text that dealt with one particular theme or topic or whether there was an intersection between different topics or themes within the piece of text. The researcher also paid attention to what an article's key message was and the point of view being relayed. Was this point of view the main argument or making a case against an argument? Macro elements such as headers and other layout features as well as the introduction and conclusion were all taken into account when examining the structural features of the text.

Next, the researcher collected and examined discursive statements. To perform this task, the researcher reviewed the coded data at their respective nodes in order to collect and organize the data for analysis. This is possible in NVivo by double clicking on a node, which provides a summary of all articles coded at the node. This summary

information also informs the researcher about the number of coded references in a given article and how much of the text was coded for that reference. As an example by double clicking on the Border Security node, the researcher was able to determine all article coded at this node, how many references to Border Security were made per article and how much of “Border Security” (calculated by percentage) was covered in each article.

For in-depth information about the articles coded at a given node, the researcher could flip from “Summary Pane” to “Reference Pane” in Nvivo. In “Reference” pane, the researcher explored nodes in detail through functions that enabled for the narrowing or broadening of context around coded references. This function was especially useful in obtaining more background information about an interview or the relationship of a coded reference to a larger argument or other text in the corpus.

Identifying linguistic and rhetorical mechanisms was the next step. The researcher began this step by looking at word groups (nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc) and exploring the contextual background behind their usage in the text. This task involved exploring the evaluative meaning behind certain words and other features that illuminate the meaning being conveyed or help shape a particular point of view. Words employed in the labeling of actors, in metaphors, to show quality or quantity provided examples of the linguistic and rhetorical elements under exploration.

The researcher also looked out for transitivity and modality systems in the text. Transitivity is “about asking how events are described: who does what to whom, and what happens without interventions from actors and....helps us capture the difference between, to use a manufactured example, *The immigrant left*, *The immigrant was*

deported and *Immigration officials deported the immigrant* - one and the same event, but clearly different constructions of reality.” (Wodak & Krzyzanowski, 2008, p. 41).

Modality is a resource for measuring the weight attached to a particular utterance. Modal verbs like *might*, *must*, *can*, *should* and *could* or modal adverbs like *perhaps* and *certainly* may imply hypothetical scenarios, serve as a call to action or create a sense of urgency (Schneider, 2013).

While examining modality systems, the researcher took note of source attribution and the presence of different “voices” in the text as they tend to play an important role in the level of credibility and commitment an author attaches to a text and the weight the reader places on what they are reading. Authors may use source attribution to augur a degree of distancing from a claim or statement or by the same token, use source attribution to legitimize or support their views while bolstering their credibility (Wodak & Krzyzanowski, 2008, p. 42).

The researcher checked for textual coherence and cohesion in order to find cohesive ties, or features that establish connections between texts such as repetition, paraphrase, co-reference and ellipsis. In addition, the researcher looked out for argumentative strategies by authors, like the use of rhetorical questions, appeals to common sense and the discursive construction of “we” groups to build rapport between themselves and the reader.

Schneider (2013) lists evidentialities, or phrases that suggest factuality, like “of course,” “obviously,” and “as everyone knows” as some of the rhetorical mechanisms

that researchers should look out for in their analysis. These mechanisms serve to “naturalize” statements not only as “fact” but also by making an appeal to common sense. The researcher took note of these too as well as nonverbal message components like visuals, page layout, frames, boxed inserts, font style and size. These are all relevant to the construction, production and presentation of discourse.

After compiling all the data and performing data analysis, the researcher was faced with the question: what does it all mean? This part of the discourse analysis process was concerned with interpreting the data by tying all the results of data analysis together in order to answer the research question. The interpretation of the data and presentation of the researcher’s findings will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Presentation

The corpus compiled for data analysis was made up of 112 articles, comprised of 60 newspaper articles, 27 magazine articles and 25 articles from a combination of other news media sources (like CNN, Fox News, NBC, Pew Research Survey). These articles, all published between 2000 and 2014, were selected for the corpus because they supplied content about news, cultural, political and legal discourse concerned with undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s. The corpus was selected to provide a representative and balanced sample of this discourse, with content ranging from news stories and reports, editorials, op-eds, interviews, commentaries and poll data.

All articles for the corpus were obtained digitally and exported into NVivo for data analysis. Data analysis was conducted through analytical coding. In this form of coding, the corpus is organized by identifying five major points of tension within the discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States, through which coding categories are developed and analyzed. These five major points of tension were determined through the researcher's own knowledge of the discourse through review of the secondary literature on undocumented immigration in the United States from 2000-2014 and by studying the issues and concepts that arouse controversy and strong views in media coverage and in the political arena. From these major points of tension, themes and related topics are derived and organized into nodes. These nodes contain coded references about these themes and topics intended to provide more insight into these tensions in order to tackle the research question.

The 5 identified major points of tension were: the tension between reward and punishment for undocumented immigrants, the tension between what undocumented immigrants contribute to society and how much they benefit from welfare and public services, the tension between border security and the demand for undocumented labor, the tension between preserving American cultural identity and assimilating undocumented immigrants and the tension between the United States ethos as a country of immigrants and an immigration policy that has increasingly criminalized immigration in the 2000s. These five major points of tension provided the basis for the development of a preliminary list of keywords to look for in the text. These keywords also served as guides for major themes and related topics to begin coding for during data analysis.

The researcher began coding by going through the corpus to determine if they contained any of these themes. While performing this task, the researcher documented the themes that were referenced in the text and their references while taking note of those that were not referenced. In addition, some themes were too broad and needed to be broken down into smaller categories that encompassed and reflected the researcher's findings in the text. During this process, the researcher also encountered new, unexpected themes that were added to the preliminary list of key themes. After each document, the researcher revised this list of themes and related topics and repeated this review process until a final, expanded list of key themes and topics were derived. This coding procedure, beginning with a preliminary list of key themes obtained through theoretical consideration to an expanded operational list derived from empirical data is known as evolutionary coding (Mayring, 2002, p. 120 as cited in Schneider, 2013).

In Figure 2, a snapshot of the NVivo project window is displayed. On the left hand side, the sources that collectively comprise all source materials used for research and other research material can be seen. The sources archive is divided into internals, externals and memos folders respectively. Internals refer to all sources acquired digitally and imported into NVivo as word documents or PDF files, and externals refers to sources that only exist as hard copies. Within the Internals, the researcher created 6 folders. In the folder for U.S. News sources, two additional folders were created to hold newspaper documents and magazine documents respectively.

The newspaper documents folder contained a wide range of genres from high circulation national dailies like *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today* as well as major regional publications like *The Los Angeles Times* and *Miami Herald*. These genres included news reports, editorials, op-eds, letters to the editor, essays, commentaries, journal entries, speeches and interviews. The magazine documents folder mostly comprised of editorials, analytical articles and political opinions pieces from editors and writers affiliated with think-tanks and other non-governmental organizations. The magazines used included *The New Republic*, *National Review*, *Time*, *Weekly Standard*, *New Yorker* and *American Spectator*.

The researcher created the Political Discourse and Legal Discourse folders to hold respective contents concerned with the political and legal aspects of the discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States. As the researcher continued to build and reorganize the corpus, there was a realization that some documents that were listed as news sources contained enough political content to be categorized as political discourse.

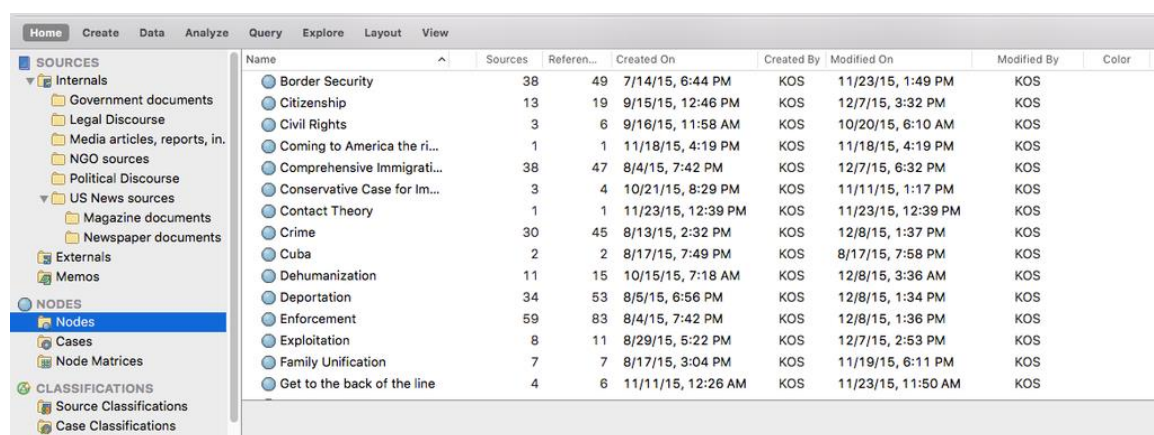
This political content included speeches and statements from politicians as well as reports on congressional deliberations on immigration. Thus, some newspaper and magazine articles that had been earlier classified as “US News sources” were transferred to the Political Discourse folder. These newspaper and magazine articles were added to other articles grouped under Political Discourse. In sum, the Political Discourse folder included political commentary and references to politicians about immigration reform from some of the newspapers already mentioned, copies of transcripts from immigration debates on *CNN* and *Fox News*, and political opinion articles from some of the magazines that have already been discussed.

The Legal Discourse folder contained op-eds, letters to the editor, and opinion articles by immigration attorneys on topics such as the legalization of undocumented immigrants and the role of law enforcement in carrying out immigration policy. It also contained editorials and news stories that weighed in on notable legal cases relevant to undocumented immigration, such as the Arizona vs United States Supreme Court Case, which highlighted the battle between states and the federal government in legislating and enforcing immigration law.

To supplement the news, political and legal discourse on undocumented immigration, the researcher created different folders for government documents, media articles and publications from organizations with an interest in immigration policy. The media articles folder contained poll data from the *Pew Research Center* and *Gallup* about undocumented immigrants and public attitudes and perceptions towards them. It also contained news coverage of undocumented immigration from news media sites like *NBC*,

Vox and *Breitbart*. The NGO sources folder contained reports and statistical data from non-governmental organizations like the American Immigration Council, Hoover Institution and the Federation for American Immigration Reform. In order to provide balance, compare and fact check data provided by NGO sources, the Government documents folder was created for statistics and other information relevant for analysis of the discourse, such as statistics provided by the Department of Homeland Security on immigration as well as U.S. Census Bureau figures.

In the Externals folder, source materials that only exist in hard copy (books) and digital content that could not be directly transferred into the software were stored. Since such materials could not be imported, a description, summary or other pertinent information about them was stored in this folder, for the purpose of coding and annotating such content.



Name	Sources	Referen...	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By	Color
Border Security	38	49	7/14/15, 6:44 PM	KOS	11/23/15, 1:49 PM	KOS	
Citizenship	13	19	9/15/15, 12:46 PM	KOS	12/7/15, 3:32 PM	KOS	
Civil Rights	3	6	9/16/15, 11:58 AM	KOS	10/20/15, 6:10 AM	KOS	
Coming to America the ri...	1	1	11/18/15, 4:19 PM	KOS	11/18/15, 4:19 PM	KOS	
Comprehensive Immigrati...	38	47	8/4/15, 7:42 PM	KOS	12/7/15, 6:32 PM	KOS	
Conservative Case for Im...	3	4	10/21/15, 8:29 PM	KOS	11/11/15, 1:17 PM	KOS	
Contact Theory	1	1	11/23/15, 12:39 PM	KOS	11/23/15, 12:39 PM	KOS	
Crime	30	45	8/13/15, 2:32 PM	KOS	12/8/15, 1:37 PM	KOS	
Cuba	2	2	8/17/15, 7:49 PM	KOS	8/17/15, 7:58 PM	KOS	
Dehumanization	11	15	10/15/15, 7:18 AM	KOS	12/8/15, 3:36 AM	KOS	
Deportation	34	53	8/5/15, 6:56 PM	KOS	12/8/15, 1:34 PM	KOS	
Enforcement	59	83	8/4/15, 7:42 PM	KOS	12/8/15, 1:36 PM	KOS	
Exploitation	8	11	8/29/15, 5:22 PM	KOS	12/7/15, 2:53 PM	KOS	
Family Unification	7	7	8/17/15, 3:04 PM	KOS	11/19/15, 6:11 PM	KOS	
Get to the back of the line	4	6	11/11/15, 12:26 AM	KOS	11/23/15, 11:50 AM	KOS	

Figure 2. Predetermined list of key themes and related topics.

The Memos folder contained notes, insights and interpretations developed by the researcher during data analysis. While analyzing the data, there were instances where the researcher had to take notes of certain wording or terminologies that were separate from

those selected for coding but relevant to the overall analysis. Thus, keeping memos helped the researcher to document and compartmentalize such information.

Under the Nodes archive, there were folders for Nodes, Cases and Node Matrices as displayed by Figure 2. The Nodes folder contained the starting themes derived from the coding categories established by the researcher. The list of keywords adjacent to the pane with the Sources and Nodes folders represent these preliminary themes. Since border security was identified within the sources of tension in the discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States, a node was created for all references within the text for that particular theme. Nodes were also created for related topics to border security, such as deportation, enforcement and crime.

As Anti-immigrant groups and immigration restrictionists tend to bemoan a less secure southern border and blame undocumented immigration across that border on the demand for undocumented labor in the United States, a node was created for Labor & Employment. Related topics such as comprehensive immigration reform that would legalize undocumented workers and regulate the illegal hire and exploitation of these workers were accounted for through the creation of nodes for exploitation, comprehensive immigration reform and legalization. Proponents of comprehensive immigration reform support not only the legalization of undocumented workers, but also the creation of a path to citizenship for them in order to prevent an underclass of workers marginalized because of their lack of citizenship. Thus, a node was created for citizenship. Since pro-immigrant groups have railed against the marginalization of

undocumented immigrants through labels perceived to be dehumanizing, dehumanization was identified as an important theme, and a node was also created for it.

Nodes were also created for some of the terminology often used in the discourse on undocumented immigration, in order to study them more in-depth within the text. Clichés like “get to the back of the line,” “coming to America the right way,” or “living in the shadows” are pervasive in spoken and written discourse about undocumented immigrants in the United States. The researcher also designated nodes for the theoretical perspectives (Contact Theory, Intergroup Conflict & Social Constructionism) intended to shed some light and aid in analyzing the researcher’s findings.

Name	Sources	Referen...	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
▶ ● Border Security	52	85	7/14/15, 6:44 PM	KOS	1/19/16, 5:46 PM	KOS
▶ ● Labor & Employment	64	84	7/14/15, 6:05 PM	KOS	1/20/16, 4:46 PM	KOS
▶ ● Crime	45	75	8/13/15, 2:32 PM	KOS	1/19/16, 5:45 PM	KOS
▶ ● Taxes & Public Benefits	48	65	8/14/15, 2:46 PM	KOS	1/20/16, 4:46 PM	KOS
▶ ● Comprehensive Immigrati...	45	55	8/4/15, 7:42 PM	KOS	1/19/16, 2:03 PM	KOS
▶ ● Hispanic	32	48	8/10/15, 5:29 PM	KOS	1/18/16, 6:50 PM	KOS
▶ ● Legalization	33	43	8/10/15, 4:18 PM	KOS	1/20/16, 4:46 PM	KOS
▶ ● Citizenship	22	34	9/15/15, 12:46 PM	KOS	1/19/16, 5:57 PM	KOS
● States Rights vs Federal...	12	20	10/18/15, 6:29 PM	KOS	1/11/16, 1:24 AM	KOS
● Illegality	17	19	8/3/15, 7:10 PM	KOS	1/9/16, 4:17 PM	KOS
● Reward or Incentive vs Pu...	6	13	1/3/16, 5:54 PM	KOS	1/20/16, 4:46 PM	KOS
▶ ● Culture	6	11	12/14/15, 11:18 AM	KOS	1/19/16, 2:12 PM	KOS
▶ ● In-group vs out-group dy...	7	9	12/14/15, 11:32 AM	KOS	1/19/16, 2:15 PM	KOS
▶ ● Social Constructionism	5	7	11/17/15, 4:37 PM	KOS	1/19/16, 2:17 PM	KOS
● Civil Rights	3	6	9/16/15, 11:58 AM	KOS	10/20/15, 6:10 AM	KOS

Figure 3. Reviewed list of themes and related topics.

Fig 3 showcases a more streamlined organization of the nodes displayed from the list of predetermined themes in Figure 2. Unlike Figure 2, several of the themes within the Nodes folder have an arrow next to them. This arrow denotes that a particular parent node or major theme has a collapsible list of child nodes or related topics. An illustration of the parent nodes with their child nodes can be seen in Figure 4. For instance, the

political effort to respond to concerns about border security due to rising undocumented immigration to the United States resulted in the focus on immigration policies that prioritized enforcement, which explains why enforcement is grouped as a child node under Border Security in Fig 5.3. Crime is a major theme in the discourse, primarily because the act of entering the United States without permission is legally defined as a criminal offense (Chomsky, 2014, p. 98) and certain terminology used in the discourse, like amnesty, sanctuary cities, terrorism and law enforcement have either strong or loose connections to crime. So the creation of Crime as a parent node along with the connected child nodes was intended to shed light on the relationship between these nodes and the relevance of this relationship to the discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States, specifically when addressing the tension between reward and punishment for undocumented immigrants in the debate on undocumented immigration.

Name	Sources	Referen...	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By	Color
Border Security	52	85	7/14/15, 6:44 PM	KOS	1/19/16, 5:46 PM	KOS	
Enforcement	70	110	8/4/15, 7:42 PM	KOS	1/29/16, 5:49 PM	KOS	
Labor & Employment	64	84	7/14/15, 6:05 PM	KOS	1/20/16, 4:46 PM	KOS	
Exploitation	15	21	Saturday, August 29, 2015 at 5:22 PM		1/11 AM	KOS	
Skilled vs Unskilled	13	20	11/16/15, 9:12 PM	KOS	1/20/16, 4:46 PM	KOS	
Economic downturn an...	4	8	12/14/15, 5:30 PM	KOS	1/10/16, 11:44 PM	KOS	
Functionalization	3	3	12/14/15, 9:02 PM	KOS	1/9/16, 8:53 PM	KOS	
Crime	45	75	8/13/15, 2:32 PM	KOS	1/19/16, 5:45 PM	KOS	
Amnesty	30	38	8/3/15, 7:10 PM	KOS	1/19/16, 5:50 PM	KOS	
Sanctuary Cities	17	23	8/12/15, 8:55 PM	KOS	1/18/16, 6:28 PM	KOS	
Law Enforcement	13	21	10/20/15, 4:55 AM	KOS	1/10/16, 7:35 PM	KOS	
Terrorism	16	20	8/16/15, 9:02 PM	KOS	1/18/16, 3:09 PM	KOS	
Taxes & Public Benefits	48	65	8/14/15, 2:46 PM	KOS	1/20/16, 4:46 PM	KOS	
Comprehensive Immigrati...	45	55	8/4/15, 7:42 PM	KOS	1/19/16, 2:03 PM	KOS	
Hispanic	32	48	8/10/15, 5:29 PM	KOS	1/18/16, 6:50 PM	KOS	

Summary			
Source Name	In Folder	References	Coverage
57,000 Reasons Immigr...	Internals\US News sour...	1	1.47%
An Invitation to Abuse a...	Internals\US News sour...	4	8.17%
Buchanan's favorite tact...	Internals\US News sour...	1	1.00%
Chaos on the Southern...	Internals\Media articles...	5	3.12%
Citizen Pain~ Fixing the L...	Internals\US News sour...	3	4.31%
CNN debate about 14th...	Internals\Media articles...	2	1.81%
CNN interview with Rep...	Internals\Media articles...	2	3.04%

Figure 4. Illustration of Parent Nodes and Child Nodes. The Parent Node Crime is highlighted and its Child Nodes are visible.

Figure 4 provides an overview of the arrangement of parent nodes and child nodes in the workspace of the NVivo program. Crime (parent node) is highlighted and the four child nodes are in view. The number of sources that reference each node is displayed, as do the number of references to each code in the sources. At the bottom of the window, the summary tab reveals all the articles with coded references of a given node (Crime in Figure 4) as well as the number of coded references in each article. “Coverage” refers to how much of the source content is coded at that particular node. In Figure 5, the references tab is selected, and it provides more detail about the information in the “Summary” tab. For each article listed in the summary, the references tab displays the name of the source that was coded at the node, the number of references coded and the percentage of the source that the coding represents, as shown in the grey rectangular areas below. Below this grey rectangular area, the percentage of the source that the reference represents is shown on the lighter grey strip with the actual coded reference just underneath. The blue highlights on the coded references indicate that the researcher made certain observations or analyses about that specific coded reference in a memo.

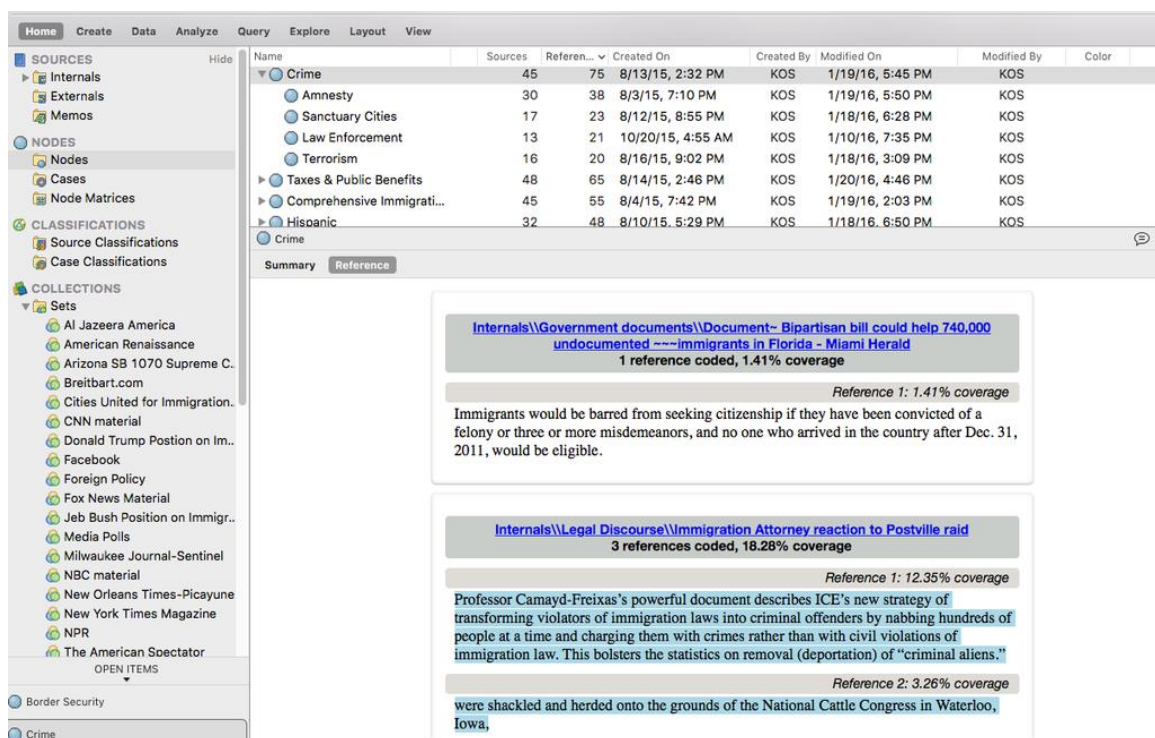


Figure 5. An illustration of all coded references for Crime.

The Taxes & Public Benefits node was created to investigate the tension between what undocumented immigrants contribute to society and how much they benefit from welfare and public services. Under this parent node, two child nodes were created, namely, "Contributions to U.S. economy" and "Payment of Taxes" to investigate this tension in greater detail within the text. A widely held belief among anti-immigration advocates is that undocumented immigrants do not pay taxes while exhausting the use of public services. So the "payment of taxes" node was created to investigate references to undocumented immigrants and taxes in the text. The "Contributions to U.S. economy" node sought to investigate certain contradictions within the discourse about undocumented immigrants. On the one hand, there's the argument that undocumented immigrants steal jobs from citizens. Yet, there is also the belief among some in the public

that undocumented immigrants do not work and freeload on public services. Proponents of comprehensive immigration reform often argue that undocumented immigrants do not only work and pay taxes, but they also create jobs. Thus, the “Contributions to U.S. economy” node was created to navigate between these assertions and beliefs in order to ascertain what the facts on the ground are.

The Culture node was initially created to investigate the tension between preserving American cultural identity and assimilating undocumented immigrants. This tension pits nativists’ fear that mass migration to the United States would lead to a loss of cultural identity against those who argue that immigrants have historically assimilated into American culture and passed it down to generations. Hence, child nodes for Nativism, Identity and Assimilation were created under the Culture parent node. As the reader delved into the text, however, there was a realization that “Culture” was a quite broad term that needed to be broken down to reflect findings in the text. Cultural concerns about immigration in general, and specifically about undocumented immigration run deeper into fears that undocumented immigrants would disrupt the social fabric of this nation. So cultural concerns about undocumented immigration did not appear to be just about undocumented immigrants being culturally different but also questions about their quality, such as the language they speak, their level of education and the skills they bring with them and whether they have values that are compatible with the host society. Cultural concerns may speak to how well undocumented immigrants can assimilate themselves but on the social level, such concerns were also about how well undocumented immigrants can integrate themselves into society and become members.

Under the “Culture” parent node, “social fabric” was created as a child node to gain deeper insight into cultural concerns about undocumented immigration on the societal level of analysis. The researcher noted that the proficiency of undocumented immigrants in English was a recurring issue because of the concern that Hispanic undocumented immigrants holding on to Spanish would hurt social cohesion. This concern hinted at the racial overtones of cultural differences between undocumented immigrants and the host society highlighted through language and the perception among some conservatives that embracing multiculturalism through immigration would lead to “enclaves” of different ethnicities that would threaten the cohesiveness required to forge a unified national American identity. To explore these cultural aspects in further detail, child nodes were created for “Speaking English”, “Inclusion”, “Multiculturalism” and “Race” under the “Culture” parent node.

It is worth noting that even though the nodes were categorized and organized using the five tensions as a guide, the researcher recognized that these categorizations were not intended to be static or rigid. There were connections and relationships across the board for nodes that were not classified or grouped together. For instance, although “social fabric” belonged to a different family of nodes (under the Culture parent node) from “contributions to US economy” (under the Taxes and Public Benefits parent node), conservative concerns about undocumented immigrants’ proficiency in English, level of education and skills hinted at the perceived importance of these socio-economic factors to the social fabric. Thus, there was an inherent connection between those two seemingly unrelated nodes.

This important point brings us to the tension between the United States ethos as a country of immigrants and an immigration policy that has increasingly criminalized immigration in the 2000s. On the surface, there is not a readily apparent connection between the two parent nodes “Crime” and “Labor & Employment”. Yet, Dick (2011) provides some insight into the relationship between these two important themes in the discourse on undocumented immigration in the 2000s:

Since the early 20th century, U.S. immigration policy has created a core contradiction: the country aggressively recruits Mexican laborers- indeed, its economic development has depended on this labor since the late 19th century-but at the same time, the U.S. government consistently provides an insufficient number of visas for their legal entry. This contradiction legitimates the integration of people of Mexican descent through their positioning as “illegal people,”....a positioning that relies on a conflation between the category “illegal alien” and the cultural image of the Mexican immigrant as a criminal Other...(Dick, 211, E35).

The above quote illustrates the link between the demand for labor in the United States, which continually motivates the hiring of undocumented workers from the southern U.S. border with Mexico even as U.S. immigration law progressively criminalized the recruitment of undocumented labor from the late 20th to 21st century. Since the recruitment of migrants from across the southern U.S. border with Mexico was a major cause of undocumented immigration, border security was a relevant theme in analyzing this tension. In addition, because Hispanics from Mexico and Latin America comprised most of the undocumented workers recruited from the south of the border, at an era when

U.S. immigration policy increasingly criminalized illegal border crossings and the illegal hire of undocumented workers, Hispanics represented an overwhelming majority of undocumented immigrants apprehended and detained in the U.S corrections facilities. The researcher created a node for “Hispanics” to investigate the unique role Hispanics play representing a major immigrant community in the United States and at the same time representing the highest proportion of undocumented immigrants incarcerated in the United States.

Chapter 6: Data Analysis

The researcher's rationale for categorizing source material going into the research was to select material from a wide range of media across the political spectrum in the United States, in keeping with the goal of building a corpus that was a representative and balanced sample of a quite polarizing discourse on undocumented immigration in the 2000s. Aligning each source material with an ideological or partisan orientation was a fairly straightforward process for some reputable newspapers, magazines and news media. For some other sources, however, this task was not as simple and the help of third-party resources was utilized to obtain an approximation/estimation of these sources' ideological background. These third-party resources included eddyelmer.com, a website designed by social gerontologist Eddie Elmer which provides a chart of the editorial positions (from Left to Right on the political spectrum) along with commentaries of several newspapers, magazines and broadcasters, and Newsprism.com, a website that rates the partisan bias of major American media, self-described as "the Internet's Homepage for News & Opinion From Liberal to Conservative."

Both resources proved to be quite useful for a few reasons. As the researcher noted, some source materials did not provide adequate information to make a determination on their ideological background. Also, as virtually all of the major, highly circulated newspapers in the United States support comprehensive immigration reform, the researcher initially surmised that mainstream media, in general, seemed to have adopted a more uniform, liberal view on undocumented immigration, which was

reflective of the seemingly broad public support for legal status for undocumented immigrants.

The researcher had anticipated that the partisan bias associated with each major U.S. newspaper would mirror their position/arguments on comprehensive immigration reform, particularly in editorials and other opinion pieces. In other words, newspapers known to have a liberal bias would largely support the Obama administration's and Democratic Party's push for comprehensive immigration reform while those viewed as conservative publications would either be against or less supportive of comprehensive immigration reform. This assumption was partially informed by the researcher's prior knowledge of positions held by notable editors and contributors to some of the source materials and their corresponding orientation on the left-right political continuum in the United States. Table 1 below provides an approximation of the relative ideological orientation of the various source materials used in research.

Table 1

A Table Showing The Relative Ideological Orientation of Various Source Materials

Far Left	Center Left	Centrist	Center Right	Far Right
Huffington Post	Washington Post	USA Today	The Weekly Standard	Fox News
The New York Times	CNN	Wall Street Journal (News)		Wall Street (opinion)
	Los Angeles Times	NPR		The American Spectator
	Time Magazine	Al Jazeera		Breitbart

	NBC, CBS			National Review
Far Left	Center Left	Centrist	Center Right	Far Right
	The New Republic			
	Miami Herald			

As it turned out, however, this assumption did not always prove to be true. *The New York Times* is generally regarded as Left-leaning. So the researcher was not surprised to read editorials and other opinion articles in the paper lending support for comprehensive immigration reform, typically the liberal view for how to fix the country's broken immigration system and the course of action to take with undocumented immigrants. *The Wall Street Journal*, however, has a reputation as a conservative daily, and yet the paper published editorials pushing for comprehensive immigration reform. This realization was a reminder that not all who identify as conservative favor restrictionist policies on immigration. Business conservatives and many liberals do share a desire for comprehensive immigration reform. Although the immigration debate in the United States is largely depicted as a clash between dominant liberal view vs dominant conservative view, the debate is a lot more complicated than just two main competing views. *The Wall Street Journal* may have editorial writers and board members affiliated with the quite conservative *Fox News Channel*, yet the paper's support for comprehensive immigration reform may not necessarily reflect the views of *Fox News* or those of the news channel's intended audience.

Perhaps the common support for comprehensive immigration reform by the liberal *New York Times* and conservative *Wall Street Journal* has less to do with partisanship and more to do with the corporate interests of the newspaper industry. In his chart of editorial positions, Elmer notes the impact and influence of such interests in the journalistic process, stating that “I doubt most of the networks (like *CNN* and *NBC*) are center-left in the truest sense because most of them are owned by corporations who have their own conservative, pro-business agendas--and who count the government as some of their subsidiaries’ major customers. In other words, media outlets which have traditionally considered themselves liberal from an editorial point of view are, within the confines of the corporate world, no more than moderately conservative” (Elmer, 2004). Elmer’s point suggests that factors like ownership and the financial background of a newspaper, magazine or news channel can influence its editorial positions in spite of its perceived orientation on the left-right political spectrum.

This point is noteworthy when one considers that there is a connection between the pro-business/corporate interests of some media companies, undocumented immigrants and the passage of comprehensive immigration reform. Undocumented immigrants fill an important niche in the newspaper delivery business. As illustrated by Chomsky (2014), a single company in Boston hired independent contractors, mostly comprised of undocumented immigrants, to deliver the *New York Times*, *Boston Globe* and *Wall Street Journal* to one location. The designation of newspaper delivery to independent contractors allows newspaper companies to be shielded from legal responsibilities as employers, while satisfying the high demand for undocumented

immigrant labor and thus keeping wages low and profits high. This low wage/high profit model helps explain the basis for pro-business support for comprehensive immigration reform (Chomsky, 2014, p. 147). Looking at the basic structure of the newspaper industry, then, the researcher hypothesizes that the common support for immigration reform between the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* can be, at least, partly attributed to the pro-business orientation of the media companies that own these major newspapers.

In comparison to newspapers, there was a much clearer dichotomy between the Right and Left views on (undocumented) immigration reflected in the articles collected from magazine sources. The researcher attributes this difference to the affiliation of magazines like *The National Review*, *The Weekly Standard* and *The New Republic* with partisan/ideological think-tanks (like the conservative Heritage Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute and the liberal Urban Institute). Such affiliations were evident as politically opinionated articles by contributing editors and writers from these partisan think-tanks formed part of the content in these magazines. The researcher also realized that the *National Review*, *Weekly Standard* and the *American Spectator* carried little to no corporate advertising and were largely funded by subscriptions, fundraisers and donations from individuals or non-profit organizations that shared similar ideological views as the magazine's ownership and producers. Thus, the conservative magazines mentioned largely published articles with views on undocumented immigration that were consistent with the views of the Republican party mainstream on the issue, and a similar

pattern was observed with liberal-leaning magazines largely representing the views of the Democratic party on undocumented immigration.

These differences between newspapers and magazines are indicative of the role special interests, economics, ideological, political and socio-cultural factors play in the production and consumption processes behind discourse, helping to shape and inform perceptions, attitudes and policies about phenomena. All these forces play their part in shaping, imposing frames and attaching meaning to the discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s.

To help shed light on the larger political, social and economic context behind the discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s, we will explore how illegality was discussed in the public sphere through the usage of “illegal immigrant” in the 2000s. Then, a more detailed investigation of the discourse will follow through analysis of the coded themes and relevant topics in the text.

Usage of “Illegal Immigrant” in the 2000s

A run-through of the discourse on undocumented immigration in the 2000s in U.S. newspapers, and generally the Associated Press, immediately reveals an issue that presents a bone of contention within the discourse: what is the appropriate term to describe those in the country who crossed the border into the United States without inspection and/or those who have overstayed their visas. There is hardly consensus on the appropriate term to use. While the Department of Homeland Security has used the term “illegal alien” or “undocumented alien” in press releases and official documents, the Associated Press has often alternated between “illegal immigrant” or “undocumented

immigrant” in publications in the 2000s. Depending on an American newspaper or magazine’s political affiliation or ideological orientation, the term used in publications ranges from “illegal/undocumented immigrant,” “undocumented/illegal alien,” “illegal/undocumented workers” to just “aliens” or “illegals.” In the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRA) of 1996, an illegal alien is defined as an alien who has entered the United States illegally and is deportable if apprehended or an alien who entered the United States legally but who has fallen “out of status” and is deportable.” An alien, according to the Department of Homeland Security’s definition, is any person not a citizen or national of the United States. Although “illegal alien” is the official term frequently used in government and constitutional documents, the usage of “illegal/undocumented immigrant” is more pervasive in the public discourse. If the use of “illegal” and “undocumented” foretells the divisiveness inherent in the discourse on undocumented immigration, the reference to those illegally in the country as “immigrants” adds to the complexity of the discourse.

The usage of “immigrant” in public discourse and the mainstream media appears contradictory to how it is defined in government documents. The DHS notes “that lawful permanent residents are sometimes referred to as immigrants,” which would make the usage of “illegal” or “undocumented” with “immigrant” questionable. The DHS adds, “however, the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) broadly defines an immigrant as any alien in the United States, except one legally admitted under specific nonimmigrant categories (INA section 101(a)(15)). An illegal alien who entered the United States without inspection, for example, would be strictly defined as an immigrant under the INA

but is not a permanent resident alien.” Thus, depending on the definition of “immigrant” one subscribes to, the term “illegal immigrant” or “undocumented immigrant” could be a misnomer. Even in official government documentation, the conditional prescription for the usage of “immigrant” presents another wrinkle to an already muddled and complicated discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s. One may ask, if official government documents and the Constitution use “alien” as a noun to refer to persons within the United States unlawfully, then why does the AP, radio and tv hosts and pop culture in general insist on using the term “immigrant?” Would government and Supreme Court documents not settle, once and for all, the correct and appropriate term to use for this group of people to prevent any ambiguity? The lack of uniformity, both in the usage and meaning of these labels is emblematic of the deeply dividing and heavily politicized nature of the public discourse on undocumented immigration.

Newspaper and Mainstream Media usage

Edward Schumacher-Matos alludes to this ambiguity and politicization of the discourse in a *Miami Herald* article, observing that “most of U.S. journalism, earnest to a fault, often tying itself into knots to be correct and politically correct, but not wanting to be irresponsible..., rejects the word ‘alien.’ Ivan Roman, executive director of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists, likened it to being from ‘outer space,’ dehumanized and therefore fair game for discrimination.. Instead, most newspapers and television news programs appear to use ‘illegal immigrant,’ the usage set by the Associated Press (AP) Stylebook” (Schumacher-Matos, 2007). The *Miami Herald*, a

traditionally left-leaning regional daily newspaper, unlike other members of the Associated Press, was part of a small number of news organizations that stopped using “illegal immigrant” in favor of “undocumented immigrant” by 2003 (Vargas, 2012).

By contrast, *The New York Times* toed the AP line of sticking with the usage of “illegal immigrant” well through the 2000s until 2012, when the paper weighed in on its audience’s thoughts on the usage of the term in the online version of the paper. In a September 2012 piece in her Public Editor’s Journal entitled, “Is ‘Illegal Immigrant’ The Right Description?,” Margaret Sullivan posed the question to the paper’s readers. Sullivan fielded the question to the paper’s liberal audience after immigration rights activist and undocumented immigrant Jose Antonio Vargas criticized the paper and the AP for their continued usage of the term, which he found “inaccurate and disparaging.” (Sullivan, 2012). Sullivan presented the paper’s view on the term as follows: “.. in referring in general terms to the issue of people living in the United States without legal papers, we do think the phrases “illegal immigrants” and “illegal immigration” are accurate, factual and as neutral as we can manage under the circumstances. It is, in fact, illegal to enter, live or work in this country without valid documents. Some people worry that we are labeling immigrants as “criminals” — but we’re not. ‘Illegal’ is not a synonym for ‘criminal.’ (Sullivan, 2012). Opponents of the “illegal immigrant” term, such as The “Drop the I-word” Campaign, a group of immigrant rights activists, had demanded that the AP stop using “illegal immigrant” in favor of “undocumented immigrant” because “illegal immigrant” aroused anti-immigrant sentiment and equated

the undocumented immigrant with criminality when they may not have committed a crime at all.

As Schumacher-Matos opined, the *Times*' stance hints at the balancing act in play by the mainstream American media to remain politically neutral while trying to be sensitive to the emotionally charged rhetoric that often animates the public discourse on undocumented immigration. The *Times* explained its opposition to the term "undocumented immigrant," likening it to a "euphemism...deliberately chosen to try to soften or minimize the significance of the lack of legal status. We avoid these euphemisms just as we avoid phrases (like 'illegals' or 'aliens') that tend to cast a more pejorative light on immigrants" (Sullivan, 2012).

The usage of "undocumented" or "illegal" in public discourse, however, suggested that the debate over the labels had deeper implications than just semantics. Schumacher-Matos writes that "the choice is critical. In the escalating battle over immigration, all sides agree on at least this: words are power. The labels that stick become the prism through which the nation views the issue. This helps determine which side wins" (Schumacher-Matos, 2007). Indeed, "undocumented" and "illegal" are more than just descriptive words for those in the country without permission. They are loaded terms that serve as code words for the two dominant ideological positions on immigration in the United States. The right-wing ideology, mostly championed by Republican conservatives and immigration hardliners, frames the discourse on undocumented immigration in a legal context, maintaining that those in the country without permission

broke the law and the term “illegal” is apt for the act of breaking the immigration laws of the United States.

Liberal Democrats, progressives and immigrant rights advocates, representative of the left-wing ideology, have pushed back against this right-wing view, arguing that “illegal immigrant” is dehumanizing in that it labels a person, not just the act, as illegal. A memo issued to Republicans by the Hispanic Leadership Network in 2013 read, “When talking about immigrants: Do use ‘undocumented immigrant’ when talking about those here without documentation...Please consider these tonally sensitive message points as you discuss immigration, regardless of your position” (Demby, 2013). The memo is quite useful in helping us understand how the liberal view on undocumented immigration frames its argument. Focusing less on the legal aspect and the act of breaking the law, the liberal argument adopts a more humanizing context, describing unauthorized immigrants as “those here without documentation” rather than “those who broke the law.” Reframing the discourse in this way pivots policies and other actions aimed at redressing the country’s broken immigration system towards “documenting” the “undocumented” or legalizing unauthorized immigrants. Thus, comprehensive immigration reform enjoys wide support among many Liberals and pro-immigration advocates because its policy proposals involve the legalization of undocumented immigrants and the creation of a path to citizenship for them. Immigration hardliners counter this liberal view by arguing that legalizing those who broke the law is tantamount to rewarding them. After all, the legalization of unauthorized immigrants in the past (through the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act) has led to more illegal immigration in the 90s and 2000s. To

stop illegal immigration and avoid rewarding lawbreakers, the emphasis on fixing the country's broken immigration system ought to be on securing the borders and stricter immigration enforcement rather than on legalization. Moreover, they argued, compassionate and friendly policies towards those who broke the country's laws at a time of economic downturn in the 2000s robs American workers of jobs, lowers wages and jeopardizes the social safety net.

Those in favor of comprehensive immigration reform respond by claiming that legalizing unauthorized immigrants will strengthen the American workforce by adding more workers and raising more revenue, which would boost productivity and inject dynamism into the American economy. What seemed clear in the discourse on undocumented immigration in the 2000s was that labels used for unauthorized immigrants by people on all sides of the debate were influenced by the political ideology they aligned themselves with and loaded with how they perceived unauthorized immigrants, what actions to take with those already in the country illegally, what to do to address illegal immigration in the future and the economic and the socio-cultural implications of legalizing undocumented immigrants among other issues. The use of emotionally charged words like "amnesty" to signal strong opposition to comprehensive immigration reform highlighted the relevance of the emotional undercurrent that accompanied the ideological differences in the discourse and provides some context to the exercise of political correctness and sensitivity in mainstream media coverage of the discourse.

By 2013, *The New York Times* and the AP's stance on the usage of "illegal immigrant" had evolved. A newly created entry for "illegal immigration" in the AP's 2013 stylebook read, "Illegal Immigration: Entering or residing in a country in violation of civil or criminal law. Except in direct quotes essential to the story, use *illegal* only to refer to an action, not a person: *illegal* immigration but not *illegal* immigrant..." (As cited in Beaujon and Thomas, 2013). Expounding on the change, the AP Senior Vice President and Executive Editor Kathleen Carroll cited "ridding the Stylebook of labels," adding that labels "end up pigeonholing people...where you use some main event in someone's life to become the modifier before their name"(As cited in Beaujon and Thomas, 2013). The AP's stated reason for making the change mirrored liberal arguments against "illegal immigrant" in favor of "undocumented immigrant." In her Public Editor's Journal in the *New York Times*, Sullivan acknowledges the AP's changes and adds, "My position on this has changed over the past several months. So many people find it offensive to refer to a person with an adjective like "illegal" that I now favor the use of "undocumented" or "unauthorized" as alternatives" (Sullivan, 2013).

Days after the AP announced the changes to its 2013 stylebook and Sullivan's changed position on the use of the term, the *New York Times* made it known to its readers that it encourages reporters and editors to "consider alternatives when appropriate to explain the specific circumstances of the person in question, or to focus on actions" (Haughney, 2013). However, it also stated that the paper "will continue to allow the phrase to be used for 'someone who enters, lives in or works in the United States without proper legal authorization'" (The Times Shifts on 'Illegal Immigrant,' but Doesn't Ban

the Use, NYTimes.com, April 23, 2013). Although, the changes made by the *New York Times* were not as sweeping as those made by the AP, their nuanced approach to the use of “illegal immigrant” indicated the paper’s acknowledgement of the sensitivity attached to the term for its readers.

The AP ban on “illegal immigrant” was significant because it drew attention to the need for sensitivity in a controversial and emotionally charged discourse. The change prompted the newsrooms of high circulation newspapers like *the New York Times*, *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *USA Today* and the *Wall Street Journal* to review guidelines for the usage of “illegal immigrant” in their respective stylebooks. A review of the corpus collected for this research, which included articles from all these newspapers, discovered that although “undocumented immigrant” was used more frequently after 2013 (the year the AP made the change to its stylebook), the term “illegal immigrant” was not banned and in some cases, was used interchangeably with “undocumented immigrant” in publications. A report from the *Columbia Journalism Review* corroborated these findings, concluding that, as of 2014, newsrooms had not reached consensus on whether to completely ban “illegal immigrant”, or substitute it with “undocumented immigrant” or use another term altogether.

Data analysis will continue with a more in-depth look of the discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s through the results of the coded themes in the NVivo program. To recap, these coded themes were derived from the five identified sources of tension within the discourse: the tension between reward and punishment for undocumented immigrants, the tension between what undocumented

immigrants contribute to society and how much they benefit from welfare and public services, the tension between border security and the demand for undocumented labor, the tension between preserving American cultural identity and assimilating undocumented immigrants and the tension between the United States ethos as a country of immigrants and an immigration policy that has increasingly criminalized immigration in the 2000s.

The tension between penalty versus reward for undocumented immigrants

The tension between penalty versus reward for undocumented immigrants pits those in favor of comprehensive immigration reform that would adjust undocumented immigrants' lack of immigration status to legal status against those who view this act of Congress as a reward for those who broke the law and as an inducement for more illegal immigration. The view that legalization is "amnesty" for people who broke the law, a wide-held view among Congressional Republicans, is a major stumbling block for Congressional Democrats and the Obama administration's desire to win support for comprehensive immigration reform. Advocates of this comprehensive immigration reform maintain that most undocumented immigrants live in fear of being deported despite otherwise being law-abiding residents who came to the United States for employment or to be reunited with their families. Although a 2015 *Pew Research* poll revealed that 72% of Americans believe that undocumented immigrants "should have a way to stay legally in the United States, almost 45% of Americans (including 55% of Republicans) believe that the Obama administration's record number of deportations in 2014 was a good thing. The results of the poll reveal a lack of consensus among the

American public about whether undocumented immigrants should be allowed to stay within the country or not. The poll also revealed that views about immigration policies are often shaped by the public's views about undocumented immigrants. In this regard, even the polls that measure public sentiment about undocumented immigration can influence results based on how questions are framed about undocumented immigrants and how those questions inherently portray undocumented immigrants. For this reason, labels are important because they help frame and shape how the public views undocumented immigrants and discussions about illegal immigration.

People who believe that legalizing undocumented immigrants is “amnesty” are more likely to believe that the use of the term “illegal immigrant” is appropriate because they believe the term accurately describes the offense of breaking the country's immigration laws. These people are also more likely to believe that legalization incentivizes lawbreakers for breaking the law and that stricter enforcement and border security measures will serve as a deterrent. In this vein, their use of “amnesty” to signal their opposition to legalization not only hints at their view that legalization would serve as a reward, but also about the negative evaluative attribution their use of the word places on undocumented immigrants. In popular culture, the word “amnesty” is often used to refer to the pardoning of prisoners and setting them free. Thus, the word tends to have strong connotations with crime and reinforces the notion among immigration hardliners that undocumented immigrants are criminals. People who oppose the use of the term “illegal immigrant” claim that it is inaccurate and dehumanizing because it describes and incriminates persons who may not have committed a crime. Since their lack of the proper

legal documents is the reason why they are in breach of the law, “undocumented” is a more appropriate term. Being “undocumented”, therefore, raises the need to seek policy directives that “document” or legalize their status. So it is quite apparent that labels significantly affect the public’s perception of undocumented immigrants and what the course of action should be as it pertains to the approximately 11 million undocumented immigrants in the country.

In an online discussion forum opened by *the New York Times* Public Editor to weigh in on readers’ views about the paper’s usage of “illegal immigrant” in 2013, one of the posts read:

Labeling someone an ‘illegal immigrant’ locks them to a perpetual status violation even though they are powerless to change it, in contrast to the way we treat other civil law violators. As Jose Vargas said, we don’t call underage or drunk drivers “illegal drivers.” We don’t call attorneys who practice without a license “illegal lawyers.” We don’t call restaurants that serve alcohol without a permit “illegal businesses.” We don’t call tax-evaders “illegal Americans.” We don’t define people who violate other civil laws “illegal” anything, even if their violation is ongoing. We do, however, reserve that ‘privilege’ for people convicted of criminal offenses (usually not white collar crimes, but most others), who are called criminals for the rest of their lives, no matter how rehabilitated they are, no matter if they finished the sentence for their crime decades ago. As a result, the term ‘illegal immigrant’ is much closer to the criminal label than NYT admits. [Whether it is justifiable to call anyone a criminal long after they have

committed a crime is another question NYT should take up. Since almost everyone commits minor crimes at some point if they ever drive a car, who exactly do we mean when we say ‘criminals’? Why do some people bear that letter interminably, but other don’t? And could NYT credibly deny the racial disparities in the way that label is actually applied?

The post raises many important points about the term “illegal immigrant”, but the researcher’s primary focus was on the parts that address the locking up of someone in a perpetual status violation and the linkage of the term to criminality because those points are essential to the penalty versus reward debate. A *Pew Research Center* poll discovered that “although consistent majorities of Republicans favor providing a path to legal status for people in the U.S. illegally...most Republicans also worry that granting legal status to undocumented immigrants would amount to a tacit reward for illegal behavior.” A magazine article entitled “Enforcement, then Amnesty” by immigration restrictionist Mark Krikorian in the *National Review* read, “amnesty is, of course, the most controversial part of any immigration plan. It rewards liars and scofflaws. It mocks those who obeyed the law. It permits illegal immigrants to keep positions that could be filled by Americans looking for full-time work. It creates large future costs for taxpayers. It can serve as a catalyst for future illegal and chain immigration. It is likely to be plagued by significant fraud.”

Both these quotes readily assume that undocumented immigrants are guilty of an illegal offense or behavior and continually tie undocumented immigrants to illegality, in a way that is only done with “career criminals.” In the magazine article, the negative

evaluative attribution of “amnesty” to legalization efforts is evident and the use of the argumentation strategy to justify the author’s opposition to “amnesty” by appealing to the moral force of honoring those who obeyed the law and ensuring that deserving, law-abiding Americans get jobs over people characterized as “liars and scofflaws” is also evident.

The “illegal” in “illegal immigrant” functions as a constant reminder that the individual being described broke the law, and thus keeping them in “perpetual status violation.” Since their illegality strips them of any rights, they are powerless to change this status. An immigration attorney offers some legal perspective:

As an attorney, my problem with the term “illegal immigrant” is that it presupposed that immigration status is fixed or static. The reality is more complex: someone who overstays their visa is in violation of our immigration laws, but the same individuals may well be an asylum-seeker who can establish that he/she meets the relevant criteria and qualifies for legal status. So if the person actually had a legal basis to stay in the country, it doesn’t seem right to refer to them as “illegal.” But the real problem with the term “illegal immigrant” (and its shorthand of “illegal”) is that it has slowly but surely come to be used to frame individuals who currently lack immigration status as being completely outside the law and therefore not worthy of any legal protection. This despite the fact that our founding documents and particularly the Constitution speak of “persons” and not just citizens being entitled to protection. It’s likely that the vast majority of our population violates the law at some point each week: we speed or

jaywalk or pay the babysitter with cash without reporting to the appropriate taxing authority. But we don't refer to ourselves as "illegal" in those situations. We do it in the immigration context only to separate and divide.

The immigration attorney's account provides insightful legal context. The label "illegal immigrant" tends to be used in a way that implies fixed immigration status. Opponents of undocumented immigration often claim that they are "pro legal immigration, not illegal immigration", an argument that presupposes that there are clear and defined distinctions between legal immigration and illegal immigration. Yet, as the immigration attorney points out, immigration status is not as static as the term "illegal immigrant" suggests: an individual with legal status could become "illegal" if they overstay their immigration visa while someone who entered the country without permission could attain legal status if they meet the criteria for an asylum-seeker or potentially gain citizenship through marriage to an American citizen. Also, the term "illegal immigrants" lumps together individuals that may belong to different immigration categories under U.S. immigration law. For instance, a mixed status family may have two parents, one who may have entered the country illegally and another who may have entered the country legally but overstayed their visa and applied for asylum. This family may be comprised of a child who was born in the United States (thus, a citizen through the 14th Amendment) and another child who may have been able to adjust their status under President Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy. This mixed status family has members who may be pigeonholed as "illegal immigrants" but the term doesn't seem accurate for all family members. In sum, although the usage of "illegal immigrant" in

political discourse and text seemingly boxes the individual being described in “perpetual status violation”, it oversimplifies the very complex, fluid reality of immigration status, where the presupposed defined line between legality and illegality can be blurred and hard to distinguish.

The refrain, “what part of illegal do you not understand”, is popularly used in mainstream discourse against those who oppose the term “illegal immigrant” to suggest the straightforwardness and self-evidence of the term, but this implicitly assumes that immigration laws outlining what is legal and illegal have always remained fixed. Immigration laws have been changed and revised in the past, contributing to the fluidity of immigration status. Chomsky (2014) provides context, explaining that “many individuals have experienced being both documented and undocumented. Laws have changed, as in 1986 when many undocumented people were offered the chance to legalize” (Chomsky, 2014, p. 88). The Immigration Act of 1990 made some revision to the 1986 law, creating the new category of Temporary Protected Status (TPS), designed to provide temporary protection and work authorization to immigrants from countries affected by war and natural disaster. Logistical problems prevented many legal immigrants from Central America to renew their TPS, and in danger of being in breach of immigration law. When TPS ended, many who benefited from the policy had to apply for asylum to be able to stay in the country legally. The 1997 Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central America Relief Act (NACARA) was created to deal with the backlog of Central Americans by providing permanent residence to certain asylum seekers. With political considerations weighing heavily on which Central American nationalities were favored

for the legalization process, NACARA too left a backlog of immigrants caught in limbo, between being “neither fully legal nor illegal” from the 1990s into the 2000s (Chomsky, 2014, pp. 89-90). Chomsky also notes that the revision of immigration laws have historically created new ways of punishing illegality “while concomitantly creating unexpected and apparently new avenues for legalization” (Chomsky, 2014, p.90). Thus, the fluidity of immigration status can be explained by the arbitrary implementation of certain changes in American immigration policy.

The attorney’s second point notes that the usage of term “illegal immigrant” provides the pretext to deny those without immigration status the legal protections that the U.S. Constitution entitles them based on their personhood. The apparent denial of legal protections entitled to them as persons implicitly dehumanizes them and provides some context to the reasons why immigration rights activists like Vargas and the “Drop the I-word” Campaign condemned the term “illegal immigrant” and protested the AP’s usage of the term in its publications. In the immigration attorney’s argument that “it’s likely that the vast majority of our population violates the law at some point each week.... but we don’t refer to ourselves as ‘illegal’ in those situations. We do it in the immigration context only to separate and divide,” s/he seemed to be comparing being in the country without permission with other civil offences. This comparison is noteworthy because the term “illegal immigrant” tends to conjure up association with crime. Yet, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy, citing the U.S. Constitution (in the majority opinion on Arizona’s SB 1070) states, “As a general rule, it is not a crime for a movable alien to remain in the United States.” This constitutional interpretation clearly

indicates that illegal presence is not a crime although the term “illegal immigrant” is often branded with criminality and bolsters the attorney’s argument that merely being in the country illegally is comparable to civil violations committed by citizens.

In this context, the use of “amnesty” to describe legislative efforts to legalize the status of undocumented immigrants already in the country stigmatizes them because of the negative evaluative attribution of the term and denies them of due process by incriminating them before trial. The attorney’s comparison of illegal presence to other civil offenses also highlights the discriminatory use of the word “illegal” as a word reserved for a class of individuals with a lack of immigration status. That their “illegality” interminably defines them in discourse draws comparisons to people convicted of criminal offenses being called criminals for the rest of their lives. In news reporting, when someone is accused of a crime, the word “alleged” is used to indicate that the accused has not been convicted and could be innocent. Until they are pronounced guilty by a court, “alleged” is used to indicate the presumption of innocence. Yet, “illegal immigrant” is used to refer to unauthorized immigrants, underscoring the immigration attorney’s argument that the term strips them of due process afforded to all persons by the Constitution.

Connection between the tension between penalty versus reward for undocumented immigrants, Social Constructionism and Dehumanization

The debate about penalty versus reward for undocumented immigrants attempts to simplify a very complex discourse by framing the immigration debate within a criminal justice lens. The political use of labels and terms, like illegal immigrant and amnesty, that

elicit themes connected with the law, crime and punishment serve to reinforce and solidify the criminal justice frame within which illegality/undocumentedness is imagined, perceived and talked about. However, venturing out of this narrow lens reveals the role of discourse in shaping and influencing how we view this social reality. Escaping this narrow lens also reveals the power of those who control discourse to shape public opinion by constructing frames and ideas that influence how people think and feel about a phenomenon. These frames and ideas are constructed by, constitutive of and disseminated through language. In this way, language, is a vehicle and lens through which social reality can be constructed and perceived.

Language also gives voice, through which stories are told. Thus, the power to control discourse is inherently linked with the power to control social reality through frames and perceptions constructed in storytelling. Jose Antonio Vargas, an undocumented immigrant activist, notes that “language belongs to the people whose stories are being told, whose distinct realities need to be accurately and fairly represented to the benefit of everyone” (Vargas, 2012). The discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s, although about undocumented immigrants, largely excludes their human stories and social reality from their perspective, in their own voices.

The immigration attorney explained how the usage of “illegal immigrant” superimposes a frame on them that places them outside the confines of the law and strips them of legal protections granted them through the constitution as persons. In this sense, the label “illegal immigrant”, indeed does dehumanize them because it perpetuates the perception and treatment of undocumented immigrants as less than human. The narrow

frame that the label imposes on them is a metaphorical symbol of the constraints on their human agency to participate in discourses about themselves and shape conversations and perceptions about themselves through their own stories. Rather, they live in frames constructed through discourses by others about them. Underlining their powerlessness, a Huffington Post article writes, “journalists are careful to qualify that crimes have only been “alleged” in part as a precaution against libel suits, but they needn’t fear legal action from undocumented immigrants, some of society’s most vulnerable members” (Arana, 2015). Thus, it is important to understand that the debate over reward versus punishment for undocumented immigrants, notwithstanding its merits, elicits frames, assumptions and characterizations that serve to dehumanize and discriminate against undocumented immigrants through discourse.

The Border Security Conundrum

The debate over tension versus reward for undocumented immigrants has a connection with border security because opponents of “amnesty”, usually congressional Republicans, support immigration policy predicated on strong border security and enforcement measures. A deconstruction of the concept of “border security” seems necessary before conducting a detailed analysis of other sources of tension and conflict in the discourse. To perform this deconstruction, let’s examine how Republican strategist Frank Luntz defines border security, in the aftermath of 9/11 in a memo in order to grasp the contexts applied to the term in the 2000s. Luntz (2005) writes:

In a post-9/11 world protecting American borders has assumed an even greater urgency. If we learned anything from that horrible day, we learned this: terrorists

can't attack America if terrorists are kept out of America. In a very real sense, border security is homeland security. Right now, hundreds of illegal immigrants are crossing the border almost every day. Some of them are part of drug cartels. Some are career criminals. Some may even be terrorists. It's time we got serious about securing our border. We need to hire, train, and deploy more border patrol agents. The security of our nation depends on it....(Luntz, 2005).

In Luntz's 2005 memo, border security is equated with homeland security, described as being under threat from "hundreds of illegal immigrants crossing the border almost every day." To secure the border, Luntz prescribes that "we hire, train and deploy more border patrol agents. The security of our nation depends on it..." Bipartisan support for the Senate's 2013 comprehensive immigration reform bill to legalize undocumented immigrants, according to Florida Senator Marco Rubio, "would begin only after steps have been taken to secure the border." The prospects of any bill about Comprehensive Immigration Reform gaining passage in the current political climate has been conditioned on a compromise between Republicans' prioritization of stricter enforcement of immigration laws and tougher border security measures and Democratic (as well as the Obama administration's) support for a pathway to legalization for undocumented immigrants. Thus, border security and enforcement are quite relevant to the discourse on undocumented immigration and often, one of the more controversial aspects of the discourse.

According to a *Pew Research Center* report, "Republicans are more likely to say tougher law enforcement and stepped up border security is the top priority. Democrats are

more likely to favor putting equal priority on tougher law enforcement as well as finding a way for those in the U.S. illegally to become citizens.” The Republican Party’s emphasis on border security and enforcement in the 2000s as a prerequisite to consider any kind of immigration reform bill placed pressure on the Obama administration to beef up security on the border. According to a 2014 *Washington Post* editorial, both the Bush and Obama administration have made significant investments in border security and enforcement in the past 14 years. These investments include the addition of 9000 Border Patrol agents to the Southwest frontier, construction of 600 miles of fencing, the installation of 12, 000 underground sensors and the deployment of aircrafts, drones and boats as part of surveillance operations on the border (“Republicans stoking false border fears”, 2014). Paul Gigot, editorial page editor of the *Wall Street Journal* and host of the weekly show, *Journal Editorial Report*, on the conservative-leaning Fox News Channel remarked in 2006 that, “restrictionists have advocated the construction of a fence to be built.... between San Diego and El Paso.... we have increased border patrols quite a bit. We’ve increased funding for drones and building walls and all sorts of enforcement measures.” (*Journal Editorial Report (Fox News)*, Interview with Heather McDonald, 2006). In fact, a *National Public Radio* (NPR) article in 2015 corroborated these reports, noting that “the U.S. border with Mexico is more secure than it’s been in 40 years” (Gonzalez, 2015). The report cited research from the Washington, D.C.-based think-tank Migration Policy Center using U.S. Census Bureau data.

The report also cited that there has been a decline in undocumented immigration at the southern border with Mexico since 2007, when it peaked at 12.2 million people.

Border apprehensions at the southern border were down by 80% since 2000. The report credited this decline to the U.S economic downturn, tougher immigration enforcement at the border, a resurging Mexican economy and demographic changes in Mexico (Gonzales, 2015). A 2015 report released by the *Pew Research Center* discovered that “the number of new unauthorized immigrants is roughly equal to the number who are deported, leave the U.S on their own, convert to legal status, or (in a small number of cases) die. The new unauthorized immigrant total includes people who cross the border illegally as well as those who arrive with legal visas and remain in the U.S. after their visas expire” (Passel and Cohn, 2015).

Media reports indicating improved border security and declining illegal immigration as a result of government investment in border patrol personnel and surveillance technology have not allayed the concerns among some Republican conservative and immigration hardliners about security and an apparent lack of enforcement at the southern border. Republican Congressman and then-House Speaker John Boehner offered his assessment of President Obama’s job in securing the border in a 2014 interview, saying “The president assured the American people that the border was secure, but clearly, it is not.” Texas Republican Governor Rick Perry, when asked the same question, offered, “I don’t know whether he’s inept or there’s something else going on, but the fact is, the border’s not secure.” The two Republican politicians were being interviewed in 2014 by conservative host, Sean Hannity (on his show on the *Fox News Channel*). That the show was entitled “Chaos On the Southern Border” was indicative of the host’s and two politician’s view about the status of the border with Mexico. Indeed, a

review of the corpus revealed growing sentiment of the border being out of control and insecure. Here are some examples:

1. *“The immigration system's failings are many. The borders are porous;”- (L.A. Times editorial, L.A. is not a sanctuary city, August 26, 2011)*
2. *“Politically, the surge in crossings has allowed conservatives to seize on the crisis as new evidence that Mr. Obama’s policies are inviting illegal immigration across a still-porous border.”- (The New York Times News analysis, 57 000 Reasons Immigration May be Stalled For now, July 26, 2014)*
3. *“The first priority of the next president should be legislation that addresses the legitimate concerns of both the people who believe America’s borders are out of control...”- (New York Times Opinion, The laws cops can’t enforce, July 31, 2008)*
4. *“What is bothering Americans most about immigration, legal or illegal, is that it frays--and threatens to rip--the social fabric; it makes them feel that things are out of control”- (New Republic article, “Citizen Pain: Fixing the Immigration Debate”, May 8, 2006)*
5. *“How about, let’s enforce the law? Today, you come in here, you get a job from illegal employers, you have free education, free health care, handcuffs on law enforcement, don’t enforce the law. And Obama has not stepped up to the plate on border security”-(Arizona Senator Russell Pearce during a debate on CNN in 2010)*

As this collection of text demonstrates, border security remains a very contentious issue within the discourse on undocumented immigration in the 2000s, with relevance to not just security at the border, but to societal, economic, cultural and law enforcement concerns as well. The text also raised an important question: Why have fears and concerns about border security persisted, and in some ways, worsened when media polls and government statistics suggest that net migration from Mexico is zero and that the Obama administration has deported record-breaking numbers of undocumented immigrants from 2011-2014? With so many different aspects to border security, it was important to break down it down and explore tensions/points of conflict within the discourse that help explain why it is so complex and controversial.

What does a secure border mean?

In Republican strategist Frank Luntz's memo, accountability on the borders is listed as the first step in securing the border. Luntz expounds on what this accountability entails, stating that "we need to put whatever police, whatever security personnel, whatever type of equipment is necessary. If it's a wall, let it be a wall. But we have to stop the flood of people across the border 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year" (Luntz, 2005). In this sense, securing the border means all actions geared towards preventing undocumented immigrants from being able to enter anywhere on the physical border between the United States and Mexico at all times. It is important to note that by using "flood" to describe undocumented immigrants, Luntz is using a word normally used to quantify liquids or refer to natural disasters as a way to dehumanize undocumented immigrants and instill fear in conservative base of the Republican party,

comprised of nativists and xenophobes. For many in this conservative base, all immigration to the United States, whether legal or illegal, ought to be severely restricted with stricter border security and enforcement at all times all across the southern border with Mexico. The building of a wall remains very popular among this base, as it is the physical manifestation of a barrier constructed from one end of the border to the other to seal out undocumented immigrants from citizens on the other side of the barrier. Alternatively, as Luntz suggests, border patrol personnel and surveillance technology ought to be used to prevent all illegal crossings along the entire southern border.

Can border security, in this context, become a reality? George Gannoe, assistant chief of the Border Patrol's Laredo Sector explained in an interview, "The best we can do is manage the border, not control it. 'Manage' means we can account for all the entries. But, even with all the resources in the world, you won't stop the flow. Even if we shut the southern border, they'd come across the northern border and up along the coasts." If complete border control cannot be guaranteed, with statistics at the border indicating that net migration from Mexico is zero and border apprehensions are significantly down, then will the border ever be secure enough to the satisfaction of restrictionists? Is it realistic to expect that every undocumented immigrant is prevented from crossing the border?

Border security remains a quite complex issue because what exactly that entails and how that is determined remains a question. Yet, border security is discussed in mainstream media as a simplified, universally agreed upon term when it really is an umbrella term for a whole range of issues involving enforcement, socio-cultural factors and economics. What does it mean to secure the border and what is fueling the ever-

present concern about border security? A look at the tension between preserving American cultural identity and assimilating undocumented immigrants will shed some light on the social-cultural aspects of the border security conundrum.

The tension between preserving American cultural identity and assimilating undocumented immigrants

Devin Fernandes (a research assistant at the Urban Institute) and Peter Skerry (a political science professor at Boston College and a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution) postulate in a 2006 *New Republic* analytical article that “Americans are bothered about legal and illegal immigration because it frays-- and threatens to rip--the social fabric; it makes them feel that things are out of control” (Fernandes and Skerry, 2006). Fernandes and Skerry’s finding suggests the important role psychology and fear play in understanding the tension over border security. In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson defines a nation as a socially constructed community, imagined by people who perceive themselves as part of that group. The nation becomes symbolic of an imagined community that is both sovereign and limited through processes by which a group socially constructs and categorize themselves. Nations express their sovereignty through the construction of boundaries that delimit who is inside those boundaries and who is outside. Those inside the boundaries, the in-group, self-identify through shared histories, language, traditions, beliefs, symbols and values that strengthen the social cohesion and solidify the boundaries of the nation from an outside entity, or an out-group. Thus, the territorial boundaries of the nation become an extension of this imagined sense of community among members of the in-group, and constructed borders become

symbolic of the limits and sovereignty of this imagined community. Yet, the psychological constraints that bind members of an imagined community to each other do not neatly fit when projected upon real-life territorial borders because an imagined community is abstract and socially constructed. This discrepancy has implications on an in-group's sense of security as a "perceived threat produces a narrow definition of group boundaries and sharp distinctions between friends and enemies. Unthinkable actions can be induced by a dehumanized image of the enemy reinforced by nationalistic propaganda" (Jeong, 2000, p. 68).

This group dynamic helps explain why undocumented immigrants are perceived as threats to the social fabric, and how this perceived sense of threat translates into feelings of insecurity and national decline within the in-group. In an analytical piece in the *New Republic* entitled "Phantom Menace-The psychology behind America's immigration hysteria," Judis (2008) writes:

These fears also crop up among local anti-immigration activist. Malzone sees illegal immigration not just as an unwelcome intrusion, but as a symptom of national decline. A wiry man with graying short hair, a goatee, and a heavy New England accent, he pounds his kitchen table for emphasis as he talks. "I love my country, and I think it is important to keep it going, because I see it failing rapidly...I'm only forty-seven years old, but I never thought I would get to the stage where I sounded like my grandparents. Oh my god, things were never this bad. Did you ever think things would be this bad" At a McCain rally in Conway, New Hampshire, a woman asks about making English the official language. "I'm

terribly concerned there's a real danger we're going to lose our country from within," she says. This concern about national decline is what sustains the cultural argument against Latino immigration (Judis, 2008).

The excerpt from Judis' article illustrates the link between border security and concepts like sovereignty, nationalism, race and culture. Illegal and legal immigration of Latin Americans to the United States poses a threat to white nationalists, who view the presence of these immigrants as an invasion of their homeland, with consequences to their way of life and their sense of identity. This fear of cultural loss and loss of country seems to animate calls to "build a wall" to secure the border or to step up border enforcement in order "to bring things under control." The fear is also conditioned by what De Genova (2006) calls the "new nativism of antiterrorism," where "illegal immigrants" are synonymous with "a corrosion of law and order, the porosity of the U.S.-Mexico border, a supposed crisis of national sovereignty itself...and declares all undocumented migrants, in effect, to be potential terrorists" (De Genova, 2006).

Another cause of fear and concern for anti-immigrant advocates is that mass migration to the United States (legal and illegal), especially from Latinos, will promote multiculturalism, which will not only threaten a sense of national identity, but fray the social fabric by creating enclaves of non-English speaking communities. These enclaves, they believe, will make assimilation of immigrants unlikely and lead to the formation of ethno-linguistic groups with different loyalties, undermining and destroying the social cohesion required for nationhood (Fonte, John, Jack Kemp's Huddled Masses-Idealists forget that Immigration needs assimilation, November 11, 2013). Alba also writes that

“some Americans fear--against the evidence of cross-generational linguistic assimilation, one should add--that Latin American immigrants and their US-born children could form a separate Spanish-speaking subsociety” (Alba, 2006). The concern by some Americans that undocumented immigrants will hold on to Spanish rather than speak English hints at their opposition to multiculturalism and the fear that multiculturalism would lead to cultural loss and national decline.

Political figures have seized upon this fear to bolster their support for anti-immigration policies. Colorado Republican Tom Tancredo remarked in 2008 that “we are undergoing a radical change in our national character and social structure, not to mention language.” Republican Paleoconservative Pat Buchanan declared “We are witnessing how nations perish. We entered upon the final act of our civilization”, warning of “an immigrant invasion of the United States from the Third World” and that “white America is in flight” in his book, *State of Emergency: The Third World Invasion and Conquest of America* (Buchanan, 2007).

A 2015 *Pew Research Center* Poll found 66% of Americans believe that immigrants are not adopting American customs or learning English quickly enough as opposed to 32% who believe that immigrants are. The same poll found that 76% of Americans believed that immigrants needed to learn English to succeed in the United States while 59% also believed that immigrants do not make the effort to learn English. While the poll did not specify between documented and undocumented immigrants, it is clear that if adopting American custom and learning English are measures of

assimilability, a majority of the Americans polled believed immigrants are not assimilating nor are they making a satisfactory effort to assimilate.

Despite the results of the *Pew* poll, Chomsky (2007) argues that the belief that immigrants are not learning English and are not assimilating are myths. Citing Veltman's "Modelling the Language Shift Process of Hispanic Immigrants," she notes that "the longer the length of [immigrants] stay, the more extensive the adoption of the English Language (Chomsky, 2007, p. 113). Rather than failing to learn English, Chomsky supports Veltman's finding by adding that new Spanish-speaking immigrant arrivals learn English without giving up Spanish. Thus, while it may seem like Hispanics aren't learning English, "what's really happening is that as one generation learns English, new Spanish speakers are arriving" (Chomsky, 2007, p.112). This dynamic was quite different from the case of earlier European immigrants, who largely adopted English as the sole language over time. In a CNN commentary article, syndicated columnist Ruben Navarrette argues that Latinos are assimilating in the United States, stating, "Following the script laid out by the Irish, Italians, Germans and Jews who came before them, Latinos are learning English, having smaller families, starting businesses, moving to the suburbs, joining the PTA and sending their kids to college. Many of them are just -- like the Irish, Germans and Jews who came before them -- trying to find ways to do all that while still preserving their culture and heritage" (Navarrette, 2009).

So if Latinos are assimilating and learning English (according to Chomsky, Veltman and Navarrette), then why does the perception that they do/are not persist in public discourse about undocumented immigrants? In attempting to debunk the myth that

immigrants don't assimilate, Chomsky compares the assimilation processes of earlier European immigrants to the United States to that of relatively recent non-European immigrants, or immigrants of color. The assimilation of European immigrants into what was initially defined as an Anglo-Saxon country was facilitated by the expansion of the racial category "white" to include these newcomers. As such, these European immigrants assimilated into white society, both in social and cultural terms. This assimilation process was different for Latin American and Asian immigrants, who were phenotypically different from European immigrants. Rather than being integrated into white society over time, they "become people of color in a racially divided society", grouped with the well-assimilated Native-Americans and African Americans at the bottom of a racial hierarchy, where very few of these immigrants can cross into whiteness, at the top of this racial hierarchy. Assimilating into this bottom rung of the social hierarchy, Chomsky adds, brings downward mobility instead of upward mobility. Thus, while some Americans blame the perceived unassimilability of undocumented immigrants on their failure to speak English and adopt American customs, Chomsky argues that not only is this perception a myth but also, that undocumented immigrants would still have problems assimilating even if they spoke English and adopted American customs because they are racially different (Chomsky, 2007, pp. 106-108)

It is worth noting that in Judis' analytical piece, he describes Michael Malzone, as "a 47-year-old second-generation Italian-American with a thick New England accent" who "loves his country and thinks it is important to keep it going, because I see it failing rapidly...I never thought I would get to the stage where I sounded like my grandparents.

Oh my god, things were never this bad. Did you ever think things would be this bad.” Malzone adds that “There was Spanish people breaking the law, and [the council] wanted to put out new signs, and they wanted to put them out in Spanish...We must have one flag, we must have one language...When you start to press one for English and two for Spanish, you know things were getting very, very bad.”

Based on the background information Judis provides and Malzone’s quotes, we can infer that Malzone’s grandparents were Italian immigrants who adopted English and the American flag through complex social processes that melded them into White America. We can also infer that his reference to “Spanish people”, likely meaning Spanish-speaking Hispanic undocumented immigrants and to “breaking the law” feed into the racialization and criminalization trope that constructs Mexican and Latin American migrants as dangerous, criminal others (Dick, 2011). Parsons Dick states that “the construction of immigrant illegality is about more than the delineation of “foreignness”; it is also a racial code...an incorporation regime that positions some immigrants as worthy of “above-table” belonging, while relegating others to ‘under the table’ exchanges that render them suspect...” (Dick, 2011). Dick’s reference to a racial code which functions as an “incorporation regime” with some immigrants being “above the table” and others being relegated to “under the table” status is analogous to the racial hierarchy described by Chomsky, in which groups integrated with white society experience upward mobility while those excluded from this society experience downward mobility.

The racial context is quite relevant to the tension between preserving American cultural identity and assimilating undocumented immigrants because race has historically been at the heart of the assimilative processes through which membership of the national “we” was negotiated. The construction of “undocumentedness” in the United States is imbued with racialized and criminalized images of Mexican and Latin American migrants as criminal others, which has led to the characterization of such immigrant groups as “foreign”, “dangerous” and “undesirable” and therefore, “unassimilable” into a national belonging, marked by racial hierarchies that construct whiteness as neutral and prototypically “American.” (Parsons Dick, 2011). Lastly, Malzone’s reference to “things were never this bad” draws parallels to a wide-held perception among some Americans that today’s immigrants (mostly from Mexico and Latin America) are different from past European immigrants, “who were able to assimilate.” On the one hand, the charge that today’s immigrants are different is valid because this difference can be attributed to racial and cultural differences. However, the different trajectories of assimilation between white immigrants and immigrants of color ensured that immigrants of color did not assimilate in the same way as their white counterparts, since immigrants of color were incorporated into the lower ranks of the social order. As Chomsky argues, it is the assimilative process itself undergirded by this racial incorporation regime that marginalizes (undocumented) immigrants, not the “myth” that undocumented immigrants don’t speak English or don’t adapt to American culture.

Border Security and the Economy (the tension between the United States ethos as a country of immigrants and an immigration policy that has increasingly criminalized undocumented immigration in the 2000s.)

Economics provide some of the most popularly-cited arguments in favor of and against comprehensive immigration reform. Pro-business interests argue that the legalization of undocumented immigrants will be a boon for the American economy as it will strengthen the workforce by providing more workers, creating more jobs and generating more revenue. Restrictionists and immigration hardliners argue that pro-business interests only support comprehensive immigration reform because of the cheap labor a pool of legalized undocumented workers would provide. They also blame undocumented workers for the loss of Americans jobs, declining wages and the abuse of public benefits. Before delving into some of the talking points in the discourse on undocumented immigration with relevance to economics, it is important to discuss the link between border security and the economy. Economic reasons are a motivating factor behind why the United States remains one of the major destinations of immigrants (both documented and undocumented) in the world. An analysis of the relationship between economics and border security in the United States would not be complete without a discussion about the historical relationship between the United States and Mexico.

It is worth noting that much of the American southwest used to be part of Mexico. “The first Mexicans in the United States did not cross any border; rather the border crossed them” (Chomsky, 2014, p. 49). Thus, the unique history between the United States and Mexico provides some much needed context to the discourse on

undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s. About 60% of all undocumented immigrants (2010 *Pew Research Center* estimate) in the United States are from Mexico, and Mexicans represent the largest foreign-born population in the United States. The demand for cheap Mexican labor has historically helped to define the long history between the United States and Mexico. Mexican migration to the United States to meet American labor demands in agriculture, railroads and mines was encouraged and not hindered by laws intended to control immigration from the American Civil War in the 1860s through the early 1900s. Workers from Mexico crossing the southern U.S.-Mexico border to work in the United States were not required to go through inspection or even required to enter through an official port or inspection point until 1919 (Chomsky, 2014, p. 43). The border between the United States and Mexico “was virtually unpoliced, and migration flowed openly” until 1924 (Chomsky, 2014, p. 49). In fact, Mexicans weren’t classified as immigrants until the United States imposed equal quotas on all countries sending migrants to the United States in 1965 (Chomsky, 2014, p. 46). From the recruitment of temporary Mexican workers in American jobs in the 1800s to the Bracero program (1942) to the illegal hire of Mexican workers after the abolishment of the Bracero program in 1964, Mexican labor has continued to play an important role in the American economy. It is of little surprise then, that undocumented immigration from Mexico, has largely dominated the discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s.

A 2004 *New Republic* analytical article, entitled “Borderline-Why we can’t stop illegal immigration”, attributes the United States inability to stop undocumented

immigration to the economic demand for cheap Mexican labor by American employers. Citing the important role Mexican workers have played and continue to play in American agriculture, the article declares that “the only thing that has changed from decade to decade, depending on U.S. policy, is whether they come legally (as immigrants), illegally, or as temporary guest workers” (Tamar Jacoby, *Borderline-Why we can’t stop illegal immigration*, *New Republic*, January 26, 2004). The article emphasizes the importance of Mexican labor to the United States by referencing the recruitment networks in Mexican villages that sustain themselves by facilitating the exportation of low-skilled labor to the United States. The article also points out that, rather than enforcement measures, economic indicators, such as wage levels in Mexico, wage levels in the United States and unemployment, have a greater impact on the flow of Mexican workers across the southern border into the United States.

Although American employers are complicit in hiring undocumented workers from across the southern border with Mexico, it is often the undocumented workers who bear the brunt of breaking the law. The subjectivity and moral relativity of branding undocumented immigrants as “lawbreakers” or “criminals” is quite apparent in this quote from an interview of Border Patrol agents in a 2006 article in the *New Republic* “If I were in their shoes, I’d be doing the same thing--coming across that border and trying to better things for myself and my family (Skerry and Fernandes, “Citizen Pain: Fixing the Immigration Debate”, *The New Republic*, May 8, 2006). Notice that in the quote, the border patrol agents appeared to view the plight of illegal border crossers (whom they are paid to apprehend) through their own humanity and seemed to empathize with them,

quite a departure from a discourse that tends to be tinged with the dehumanization of undocumented immigrants through constructions and perceptions of them as criminal others. In addition, the border patrol agents, seemingly overlooking the illegal act of crossing the border or being in the country without permission and admitting that “they would be doing the same”, hinted at how enforcement alone cannot address the country’s border security issues and the need to broaden the border security debate to include other contexts like history, foreign policy, the economy and globalization as well as the impact of the relationships between these different contexts on border security.

In a 2008 letter to the *New York Times* editor, titled “To End Illegal Immigration, Eliminate the Incentives”, Texas Republican Congressman Lamar Smith, stated “Illegal Immigration is not a problem without a solution. Enforcing current immigration laws and eliminating incentives like the job magnet and birthright citizenship would work over time.” While Smith recognizes that economic factors are motivating factors for illegal immigration, his solution of “eliminating the job magnet” is quite illuminating. Congress, in 1986 through the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), took steps to “eliminate this job magnet” by passing a combination of tough border and interior enforcement laws to discourage undocumented workers from crossing the border to look for jobs while making it more difficult to hire them by criminalizing their employment and imposing employer sanctions.

Yet, these measures failed to curtail undocumented immigration to the United States for several reasons. The employer sanctions only applied when employers knowingly hired undocumented workers. Thus, they were not held accountable for the

use of fraudulent papers by undocumented workers to seek employment. Also, making the hiring of undocumented immigrants illegal resulted in a black market that hired them “under the table” and exploited undocumented workers, often under unfavorable working conditions. Even when employers were caught knowingly hiring undocumented immigrants, they were assessed a small fine (Chomsky, 2014, p. 114). To sum it up, “it was a bumbling intervention that succeeded in making migrant workers more vulnerable, while contributing to increasing the numbers of the undocumented” (Chomsky, 2014, p. 114). A 2015 *NBC News* report illustrated the arbitrary nature of the employer sanctions, as they were lifted in New Orleans to meet federal contractors desperate need for migrant labor to clean up and rebuild the city in the destructive aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The report claimed that “so great was the demand for workers that the Bush administration temporarily suspended immigration status of people who worked for them. In doing so, it allowed federal contractors to hire undocumented workers to help meet the demand” (Nevarez, 2015). It also added that many Latino migrants, “promised of high wages and abundant work...became victims of wage theft and still haven’t gotten paid for the work they did to help rebuild New Orleans--even 10 years after the storm” (Nevarez, 2015). Evidently, interior enforcement measures, like making the hire of undocumented immigrants illegal and imposing employer sanctions have been counterproductive in stopping undocumented immigration. Moreover, the ever present demand for cheap labor in the United States undermines and negates enforcement efforts, both in the interior and on the borders.

To better understand the underlying reasons for the failure of employer sanctions and enforcement in addressing undocumented immigration, it is important to realize that, if border security is defined as the result of policies and directives aimed at stopping undocumented immigration to the United States, then the economic incentives that motivate the supply of labor from Mexico and Latin America and the demand for cheap labor within the United States present major challenges in securing the border and curbing undocumented immigration. These economic incentives don't exist in a vacuum. They are shaped by historical relationships between the United States and other countries in Latin America and other parts of the world, foreign policy, international treaties and a globalized economy in an increasingly interconnected world.

All these different contexts are also important when talking about border security because individually and cumulatively, they impact migratory flows to and from the United States and around the world. This means that policies designed to punish those who employ undocumented immigrants and tighten enforcement at the border are inadequate and ineffective in addressing border security or stopping undocumented immigration because they prescribe narrow, half-baked responses to a phenomenon that is global in scope and multi-faceted. Moreover, such policies tend to be linear and address the symptoms of undocumented immigration from the vantage point of the United States, not the underlying causes of migratory flows to the United States from a global angle. It is important that the discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States is broadened to take into account the previously mentioned relevant contexts that influence migratory flows around the world and towards the United States.

Nevertheless, the researcher narrowed analysis to the domestic level in order to explore some of the sources of tension in the discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States related to economics and employment.

The tension over how much undocumented immigrants contribute to American society versus how much they benefit from it

Although the most common reason cited for opposition to undocumented immigration is the view that undocumented immigrants broke the law, economic reasons form part of the argument for this opposition or provides justification for the opposition to undocumented immigration. These economic reasons range from the belief that undocumented immigrants take jobs away from American workers, they drive down wages and drain the economy, they don't pay taxes and that they abuse and overwhelm social services. A research article ("Citizen Pain: Fixing the Immigration Debate") by Skerry and Fernandes (2006) in the *New Republic* discovered that "when Americans denounce illegal immigrants, they complain about lost jobs, overcrowded schools and emergency rooms, and noisy, dirty neighborhoods where nobody speaks English." In the same article, the researchers noted that "two-thirds of respondents were concerned that illegal immigrants 'take jobs away from U.S citizens', while 87 percent worried that illegals 'overburden government programs and services.'" The researcher compared Skerry and Fernandes findings with Republican strategist Frank Luntz's memo (entitled *Respect for The Law & Economic Fairness: Illegal Immigration & Prevention*) in order to find any common patterns, themes or concepts. In Luntz' memo, he writes:

For most Americans, protection is as much about economic security as it is about homeland security- so say it and personalize it...This is about overcrowding of YOUR schools, emergency room chaos in YOUR hospitals, the increase in YOUR taxes, and the crime in YOUR communities (Luntz, 2005).

It is worth noting that the term “illegal immigrants” is used in both Luntz’s memo and Skerry and Fernandes’ research article, which were published in 2005 and 2006, respectively. In Skerry and Fernandes’s findings, a recurring theme about undocumented immigrants was that they take jobs away from Americans. Yet, the most common theme between their findings and Luntz’s memo was “overcrowding schools and emergency rooms”, another way of saying that they “overburden government programs and services.” Notice that Luntz ties economic security to homeland security as a way to say that “the same individuals that threaten our sovereignty also threaten our economy, government services and programs” (Luntz, 2005). In this way, Luntz, not only intensifies the negative evaluative attribution of undocumented immigrants but also makes the supposed threat they pose seem ubiquitous. The view that undocumented immigrants overburden government program and services fits part of a larger narrative that they are a drain on the economy. Chomsky (2007) provides insight into this larger narrative, explaining that “generally, those who say immigrants are a drain on the economy are referring to the myth that immigrants use more in public services than they pay in taxes” (Chomsky, 2007, p. 39).

The perception that undocumented immigrants use more than they contribute, coupled with words that denote that something is over capacity, such as “overcrowded”,

“overburdened” or “drain” feeds into public sentiment that “things are out of control.” In Luntz’s memo, this feeling of “out of control” is elicited through the use of the word “chaos.” The topoi of chaos or “out of control” from large numbers of undocumented immigrants exhausting public services while paying little to no taxes is instrumental in breeding public fear and anger, two necessary ingredients in stirring anti-immigrant sentiment. The resulting fear and anger, in turn, leads to calls for stricter border enforcement.

In a 2010 *CNN* interview, Arizona Republican Senator Pearce, when asked about what to do with undocumented immigrants offers, “How about, let’s enforce the law? Today, you come in here, you get a job from illegal employers, you have free education, free health care, handcuffs on law enforcement, don’t enforce the law. And Obama has not stepped up to the plate on border security.” (*CNN Debate: Granting Citizenship.*, 2010). In the Senator’s response, there’s a wide-held perception among many conservative Republicans that the lack of border and interior enforcement means undocumented immigrants take American jobs, use public services and enjoy welfare benefits for free, without contributing to the system through paying taxes. (As a side note, there is also the perception that undocumented immigrants don’t work which conflicts with the perception that undocumented immigrants take jobs from Americans. Even when some anti-immigration advocates grant that undocumented immigrants work, they justify their anti-immigration stance by claiming that some undocumented immigrants may work but still don’t pay taxes because they are being hired illegally). The senator’s comments invoke the “use-of-services” grievance, a type of economic self-interest theory that

focuses on natives' fears about paying more taxes because of undocumented immigrants' use of public services like education and health care (Fetzer, 2000, p. 14). The "use-of-services" grievance is usually characteristic of the justification for anti-immigrant sentiment primarily among the affluent (Fetzer, 2000, p. 14).

However, a 2008 annual report on Social Security cited in a *New York Times* editorial found that "undocumented workers pay taxes during their work lives but don't collect benefits later" and that because "undocumented workers are entering the United States at ever younger ages and are expected to have more children while they are in the United States at later ages, there will be a substantial increase in the number of working-age people paying taxes, but a relatively smaller increase in the number of retirees who receive benefits, a double boon to Social Security's bottom line." (*How Immigrants Saved Social Security*, April 2, 2008).

A *Los Angeles Times* news article, citing the U.S Chamber of Commerce, states that "illegal immigrants are working hard and performing tasks that most Americans take for granted but won't do themselves" (Brooks, 2006). A 2011 Washington Post editorial notes that "undocumented immigrants continue to live in the shadows, doing hard, dirty and dangerous work that most American won't do, all the while paying taxes and contributing to the economy" ("The GOP's Immigration Rhetoric", December 1, 2011). A 2016 report by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce (which is pro-immigration reform) corroborated these findings. The report found that undocumented immigrants pay billions of dollars in taxes each year. It also found that undocumented immigrants are not eligible for federal public benefit programs and even legal immigrants face stringent

eligibility restrictions. Contrary to some of the myths in the discourse on undocumented immigration, the reports states that immigrants are learning English, immigration does not cause crime rates to rise, and immigrants are actually less likely to commit crimes or be behind bars than native-born Americans. Other noteworthy points in the report are that undocumented and legal immigrants have economically revitalized many communities throughout the country and that immigration reform is an integral part of any effective border security strategy (“Immigration Myths and Facts”, 2016).

If undocumented immigrants do work that Americans won’t do, pay taxes, sustain social security, create jobs and contribute in substantial ways to the economy, then why is there a great deal of misinformation about the impact of undocumented immigrants and immigration overall? A 2015 *Wall Street Journal* weekly column argues that the immigration debate, particularly the political conversation, is caught in a time warp, “dominated by trends of decades past and largely missing the immigration issues that really matter today” (Seib, 2015). This argument carries weight considering the fact that fears over border security persist although DHS statistics indicate that border apprehensions are significantly down and border analysts maintain that the border is more secure now than it’s been in forty years. The article also points out that although Hispanics usually dominate discourse about immigrants in general, China replaced Mexico as the top sending immigrants to the U.S., according to a 2015 U.S. Census Bureau study. While Mexican immigration has been declining, “the new face of American immigration is more likely to be Asian, who are better educated and more

economically successful”, according to Alex Nowrasteh, an immigration analyst cited in the article.

In addition to today’s immigration debate not reflecting current trends, events and issues, the researcher agrees with Skerry and Fernandes’s (2006) hypothesis that, for many Republican conservatives and immigration hardliners and restrictionists, in general, the perceived disorder and transience associated with the mass migration of undocumented immigrants and legal immigrants is a bigger concern than the economic benefits undocumented immigrants bring. The concern about transience stems from some Americans belief that migrants come to the United States to work hard, accumulate money and then return home to invest their savings on property there. Skerry and Fernandes quote Princeton immigration scholar Douglas Massey, who explains that, “left to their own devices, most Mexican immigrants would work in the United States only sporadically and for limited period of time” (Skerry & Fernandes, 2006). Massey also pointed out that even migrants with legal documents don’t necessarily intend to stay (Skerry & Fernandes, 2006). Massey’s assertion is supported by University of California-Irvine anthropologist Leo Chavez, who explains that undocumented and legal migrants tend to be “target earners”, intent on maximizing their earnings, even to the point of subjecting themselves to putrid living conditions in order to meet their short-term target monetary goals. Their departure from immigrant neighborhoods to their native countries results in empty classrooms and an exodus that destabilizes the communities that they lived and worked in. The transitory nature of these migrants also inhibits sustained communications and interactions required to build social cohesion and relationships for

community-oriented tasks like policing and town hall meetings. As a result, many natives in such communities are more likely to view them as threats, agents of crime or outsiders.

Functionalization

The perception of undocumented immigrants as transient actors and agents of disorder is quite relevant not only because it fuels many immigration restrictionists view that they disrupt social cohesion and fray the social fabric, but also because it reveals how the perception of undocumented immigrants as workers and immigration policies that narrowly define them as guest-workers contribute to behaviors and practices that fail to integrate them or incentivize them to stay in communities. Functionalizing them, or referring to them in terms of what they do, tends to ignore that many undocumented immigrants already have deep roots in American families, communities and businesses. Thus, even if discourse and policies dehumanize and marginalize them merely as “illegal/undocumented workers”, many undocumented immigrants already are an integral part of the U.S. economy and are fathers and mothers to U.S. citizen children, whom the state might have to assume the responsibility of taking care of with taxpayer money should their parents be deported or forced to leave after their guest-worker visas expire.

A *Miami Herald* opinion article suggests that, “a large-scale guest worker program conflicts with our country’s historic concept that people who live and work in this country, native or immigrant, should be able to strive to succeed, earn the right to vote, pay taxes, raise families and settle into their communities. The foundation of our nation has always rested on the idea that we become stronger by giving those who move here to find work a chance” (Goldstein, 2012, We’re a nation of immigrants, not

‘guests’). Several American cities, led by their mayors, seem to be on board with developing policy that recognizes undocumented as more than just workers but as integral parts of their communities through the *Cities for Action* project.

Comprising of over 100 cities and counties, *Cities for Action* is a coalition of city governments who “are shaping the national debate, working together to welcome and embrace new immigrants, and promoting legal and community-based efforts... in support of stronger cities through immigration action” (“Statement from Cities”, 2016). The coalition’s principles involve “creating an inclusive, humane and timely path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants and secure resources to support local implementation, reuniting families by facilitating immigration visa backlogs in the family immigration system and advocating for and allocating necessary resources for economic, social and civic integration programs that empower immigrants and strengthen their communities” (“Statement from Cities”, 2016).

Cities for Action’s efforts to fully integrate undocumented immigrants during a decade when congressional gridlock has stalled comprehensive immigration reform, individual states have passed restrictive immigration laws and President Obama’s executive actions on immigration are being challenged by several states seems anticlimactic, especially in a political climate where presidential candidates have fanned the flames of anti-immigrant sentiment. Yet, it also demonstrates that even if the discourse and politics don’t reflect facts on the ground, social processes and actors emerge and respond to change sometimes before discourse and politics catch up.

The tension between the federal, state and municipal level of government

Cities for Action is attempting to set into motion what comprehensive immigration reform was supposed to implement. While integration benefits undocumented immigrants by according them the recognition, rights, identification and inclusiveness of community membership, participating cities and counties stand to benefit from the fruits of social cohesion, economic growth and dynamism and more efficient use of policing and enforcement resources. It would also address the anxieties some Americans have about transience and disorder by incentivizing undocumented immigrants to establish social ties that make it more likely for them to stay in communities in these cities and counties with their families, regardless of whatever their original intentions may have been. Being able to live in a city where they can start families and raise kids who are American citizens would incentivize undocumented and legal immigrants to buy houses and make decisions rooted in the long term interests and goals in these cities.

Cities for Action provided some insight into the analysis of the discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s that wasn't readily apparent to the researcher. First, that the mobilization of some of the biggest cities and counties in the United States to create an integrated and inclusive environment for undocumented immigrants demonstrated the disconnect between metropolitan areas and states on immigration issues. While the president receives staunch support from these cities for his executive actions on immigration, several states have filed a lawsuit against his administration for those same executive actions on immigration. In a sign of the

complexity and controversial nature of the immigration debate, many of the cities backing the Obama administration are situated in states contesting his administration's executive actions on immigration. Another dynamic that illustrates the disconnect between the cities and counties that are part of *Cities for Action* and the states suing the Obama administration is the partisan divide. While 24 of the 26 states suing the administration have republican governors, all the mayors representing cities that are part of the *Cities for Action* coalition are democrats (Brownstein, 2015). Thus, the politics of immigration casts a long shadow that looms over the standoff between cities and states over the President's executive actions on immigration.

Secondly, the standoff between cities and states over the President's executive actions on immigration is a textbook case for examining contact theory because it "focuses on the distribution of immigrants in one's neighborhood or region and on how many and what kind of personal contacts one has with newcomers" (Fetzer, 2000, p. 15). Several of the cities that are part of the *Cities for Action* coalition backing the Obama administration are home to large populations of undocumented immigrants, while most of the states suing the administration have small populations of undocumented immigrants. In fact, the over 100 cities and counties backing the Obama administration have a larger population than the states opposing the administration (Brownstein, 2015). Commenting on the demographic differences between the cities and states, sociologist Manuel Pastor observes that, "It has always been striking to me that these places that have very few immigrants are the most unnerved by their presence. But in the places that have long-settled immigrant populations--and, in particular, have large shares of the undocumented-

-these populations have become deeply interwoven into the fabric of the overall community” (Brownstein, 2015).

Pastor’s assessment is consistent with the findings of Gordon Allport, the most noted scholar for contact theory, who argued that the nature of the contact an out-group has with an in-group (in this case, undocumented immigrants as the out-group and city natives as the in-group) can impact the degree of prejudice the members of the in-group will have for members of the out-group. Mayor Bill de Blasio of New York, one of the cities with the largest shares of the foreign-born population in the United States and undocumented immigrants remarked in a speech urging the United States Supreme Court to move forward in reviewing the President’s executive actions on immigration, “Cities are where immigrants live, and it is our residents, communities and economies that will reap the benefits from these policies. Cities are united, and we will fight for immigration reform in the courtroom, in Congress, and in our communities. As this legal challenge continues, our voices will be heard” (Abrams, 2015). From de Blasio’s quote and Pastor’s assessment, the researcher makes the inference that because big cities like New York are home to big populations of non-citizens and undocumented immigrants, the frequency of interaction between these social groups and city natives decreases the likelihood of prejudice and at the same time, increases the likelihood that they will all work together to achieve common goals.

Chapter 7: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s is quite complex. Comprising of so many different facets, the 2000s represents the latest installment of a debate that has been ongoing ever since the formative years of U.S. nationhood. Often dubbed a nation of immigrants, the importance of immigration (both legal and illegal) to American nationhood and history is self-evident. Although the immigration debate in the 2000s is quite unique in its own way, it is worth noting that many of the same concepts that dominated the discourse in past eras have resonance in today's discourse. Yet, in the aftermath of the September 11th terrorist attacks and political, social, economic and global contexts particular to the 2000s, the contemporary discourse on undocumented immigration presents its own set of challenges and conflicts. To investigate these challenges and conflicts, an analysis of the discourse in the news, political and legal discourses was conducted. Newspapers and magazines play an influential role in contributing to the discourse through the content they publish but they also are representative of the competing interests at play in the development of law, policy and ideology about undocumented immigration. The corporate interests that own or are affiliated with major newspapers have a vested interest in an immigration policy that furthers their pro-business goals. Magazines that weigh in on the discourse on undocumented immigration are affiliated with think-tanks and advocacy groups that wield influence on political action on immigration. In addition, the target audience of newspapers and magazines include politicians and affluent groups that are powerful players in influencing public opinion on undocumented immigration.

The Associated Press' usage of "illegal immigrant" in the 2000s, to a large extent, helped to naturalize and normalize the usage of the term in public discourse. As the term garnered contexts that racialized and dehumanized those it was used in reference to, the support of its usage by anti-immigrant groups and the condemnation of its usage by immigrant rights groups was symptomatic of the polarizing and highly politicized nature of the discourse. The changes in the AP stylebook in 2013, in which usage of "illegal immigrant" was discouraged seemingly signaled a rejection of the "accuracy" and "neutrality" of the term "illegal immigrant" and demonstrated a heightened sense of sensitivity within the mainstream media in coverage of the discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s.

As significant as the change in the AP's stylebook was, "illegal immigrant" is still used in media coverage of the discourse. In fact, the researcher encountered the term on numerous occasions while performing data analysis. Labels like "illegal immigrant", however, tend to offer a narrow perspective of a discourse that is more complicated than just the legal context. It is crucial that media coverage of undocumented immigration tell the bigger story behind the phenomenon. A 2014 Miami Herald opinion article states:

Somehow journalists - as well as scholars, activists and policy-makers - have to find a way to tell this bigger story of the powerful actors and structural factors that make it crystal clear why so many people are making desperate choices to come to the United States. We need less de-contextualized narrative reporting about immigrants and border patrol and more explanatory journalism about immigration as a process and its links to globalization. We need more and better news

coverage about why the immigration problem exists today in order to provide a better roadmap for legislation to fix it. (Benson, 2014).

In order to study other relevant contexts and themes in the discourse, sources of tension within the discourse were identified. These included the tension between reward and punishment for undocumented immigrants, the tension between what undocumented immigrants contribute to society and how much they benefit from welfare and public services, the border security conundrum, the tension between preserving American cultural identity and assimilating undocumented immigrants and the tension between the United States ethos as a country of immigrants and an immigration policy that has increasingly criminalized immigration in the 2000s.

Several themes arose from analysis of the tension between reward and punishment for undocumented immigrants. Crime was one of these themes, and the view that allowing undocumented immigrants to stay in the country is tantamount to amnesty reveals the implicit association of undocumentedness with criminal contexts. Aviva Chomsky (2014) chronicles the increase in the detention of undocumented immigrants during the first decade of the 2000s, a by-product of the Bush administration's War on Terror that resulted in immigration cases being taken out of the civil immigration system and increasingly being tried within the criminal justice system. These turn of events, coupled with a combination of border enforcement and restrictive immigration policies in the 2000s that resulted in the detention and incarceration of thousands of undocumented immigrants resulted in immigration being the top federal crime by 2011 ("Illegal Reentry Becomes Top Criminal Charge", 2011). The statistics linking undocumented immigrants

with crime, then, serve to reinforce pre-existing stereotypes of undocumented immigrants as lawbreakers and constructs every undocumented immigrant as a criminal other (including those who have not committed a crime but are guilty of the civil offense of being in the country without permission).

The taken-for-granted, broad generalization that all undocumented immigrants are criminals pre-empts the view among anti-immigrant advocates that policy actions on immigration ought to hold these “criminals” accountable by bringing them to book for breaking the law. Policy actions predicated on legalizing these “criminals” are, in their view, a reward for behavior that should be punished and discouraged to prevent more undocumented immigration, a position opposed by many democrats and immigration activists, who believe calling undocumented immigrants “illegal” paints them all as criminals, which is not only inaccurate, but also denies them of due process and dehumanizes them. Thus, within this tension the links between illegality, border security and crime are evident in ways that bring up other subjects, like dehumanization and whether undocumented immigrants should be entitled to rights constitutionally afforded to all persons based on their personhood/humanity, or whether these rights can be denied them based on their lack of citizenship.

The question of whether undocumented immigrants are entitled to constitutional rights automatically afforded to citizens based on the premise that “all men are created equal” runs counter to the idea of a protected “we” in a nation, who by virtue of their belongingness through racial and cultural ties within a territorial boundary are distinguished from those who are outside of these boundaries. The construction of those

outside these boundaries as threats and people who don't belong to the in-group or protected "we" causes the in-group to place an emphasis on border security and enforcement. In the aftermath of the September 11th attacks and the national hysteria that ensued, immigration became conflated with terrorism on the national security agenda. Protecting the "homeland" from terrorists meant keeping all outsiders, who may be potential terrorists, out. This narrative of immigrant-terrorist threat magnified border security concerns into fear and insecurity, and resulted in the passage of increasingly restrictionist immigration legislation and the implementation of more stringent enforcement policies that conflated anti-terrorism efforts with measures aimed at curbing undocumented immigration (Massey & Pren, 2012). Such policy actions included the increasing militarization of the southern U.S. Mexico border in the late 90s through the 2000s, leading to a significant increase in border apprehensions, detentions and deportations of Hispanic undocumented immigrants within the United States. Hispanics represented more than half of those arrested on federal charges in 2011 ("Illegal Reentry Becomes Top Criminal Charge, 2011), as immigration became a highly racialized crime.

As Massey & Pren (2012) discovered, the restrictive and stringent immigration policies put in place before and during the 2000s did little to curb undocumented immigration. In fact, the rise in undocumented immigration and the leveling off of the phenomenon in the 2000s had less to do with border security and enforcement actions and more to do with economic factors like wage levels in Mexico, wage levels in the United States and unemployment, which have a greater impact on the flow of Mexican workers across the southern border into the United States. Thus, the slate of immigration

policy actions in the 1990s through the 2000s aimed at boosting border security and enforcement sharply contradicted the aggressive recruitment of Mexican laborers by American employers. De Genova (2002, 2005) and Massey (2007) highlight this contradiction, arguing that the country's economy very much depends on the recruitment and exploitation of Mexican labor even as much of its public discourse and policy constructs them as dangerous Others. This contradiction sheds light on the tension between the United States ethos as a country of immigrants and an immigration policy that has increasingly criminalized undocumented immigrants in the 2000s.

Dick (2011) provides more insight on the effect of this contradiction, pointing out that it leads to the social categorization of people of Mexican descent as “illegal people”, which “relies on a conflation between the category ‘illegal alien’ and a cultural image of the Mexican immigrant as a Criminal Other, so that when one speaks of illegal immigration, one pictures not the white British nanny who has overstayed her visa, but a menacing movement of dark-skinned people from south of the border” (Dick, 2011). The concern among immigration activists that Arizona's controversial anti-immigration law, SB 1070, would lead to the racial profiling of Hispanic citizens and residents in Arizona can be understood within this racial context.

The racial context hints at the tension between preserving American cultural identity and assimilating undocumented immigrants. The racialization and criminalization of Mexican and Latin American immigrants constructs them as inherently threatening, foreign, dangerous Others whose incorporation into a pre-existing racial order that constructs whiteness as “American” relegates them to the lower ranks of that

racial order. Assimilation into the bottom of the racial hierarchy, according to Chomsky (2007), means downward mobility which has economic ramifications. At the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder, undocumented immigrants are perceived as people who overcrowd hospitals and classrooms, freeload on welfare and public services and do not pay taxes. In a nutshell, undocumented immigrants represent a burden and drain on society. This perception runs counter to well-documented reporting and U.S. Chamber of Commerce statistics reports that show that undocumented immigrants pay taxes, don't collect social security benefits, work and create jobs that boost the economy and do not benefit from welfare programs, thus setting up the tension over how much undocumented immigrants contribute to American society versus how much they benefit from it.

Citing the National Research Council, de la Garza (2006) noted that states with large concentrations of undocumented immigrants incur costs from undocumented immigration. Undocumented immigrants cost citizens over \$1,000 per family in California. It is worth noting, too, that living in the shadows and being excluded from the work force and public benefits like education inhibits undocumented immigrants from becoming productive members of society, a consideration which could potentially offset the cost of undocumented immigration to citizens. De la Garza also adds that the federal government benefits most from immigrant taxes "because the cost of the services it provides are much lower than the amount it receives from social security and other taxes, while local governments lose the most since the cost of the services they provide exceed the taxes they receive" (de la Garza, 2006). These set of circumstances create tension between the federal government and local government, and the fact that 26 states, led by

Texas, a state with a large population of undocumented immigrants have filed a lawsuit against the Obama administration in 2014 over its plans to provide deportation relief and work authorization for millions of undocumented immigrants, citing economic costs and public safety concerns to affected states reflects the discord between the federal government and states over immigration policy.

Proposals to fix the nation's broken immigration system ought to seriously address and analyze the cost of undocumented immigration to states as the tension between the federal government and local governments could have major implications on the immigration debate in the foreseeable future. It is worth noting that California and New York, unlike Texas, were not part of the lawsuit against the Obama administration over its plans to provide deportation relief to undocumented immigrants even though they represent the three states with the highest population of undocumented immigrants. Moreover, of the estimated 3.6 million undocumented immigrants that stand to benefit from the government's relief program, more than half, or 2.2 million live in states that did not join in the lawsuit against the federal government while most of the states suing the administration have small populations of undocumented immigrants (Parlapiano & Park, 2016). Many of the big cities that are part of the *Cities for Action* Coalition also support the legalization and path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants and are situated in the states that did not join the lawsuit against the federal government.

These trends present a quite complicated picture of undocumented immigration in the United States and hint at a discourse characterized by a complex landscape of racial demographics, economics, the distribution and concentration of undocumented

immigrants, types and levels of interactions between undocumented immigrants and their communities, immigration politics and the multi-faceted nature and decentralized levels of government in the United States (Wells, 2004).

Limitations

The use of secondary sources to conduct research for this dissertation offered several advantages. Readily available and accessible data obtained through newspapers and magazines articles and online source material saved time, energy, money and other resources that would have otherwise been expended while conducting fieldwork. In addition, the availability and accessibility of these sources in the public domain alleviated the researcher's concerns about issues dealing with confidentiality and consent during data collection. By the same token, however, research based on secondary material is not without some shortcomings. Some room for error is inevitable, as research dependent on secondary sources must account for possible errors, misinterpretations and biases from primary sources. The heavily politicized nature of the debate on undocumented immigration and immigration reform, in particular, makes for a very controversial and polarizing discourse. These biases may influence the content, wording, context and statistics encountered in the course of research. In order to mitigate the impact of biases and other such limitations, the dissertation drew from a wide variety of sources, including those with left-leaning, right-leaning and centrist political affiliations. The aim here, was to reduce the margin for error, by presenting an all-inclusive, balanced and multi-faceted picture that is representative of the views and opinions expressed within public discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s.

During the course of research, inferences, judgments and interpretations may have been made from figures and other statistical data provided from polls and surveys in newspapers, magazines, Census Bureau and DHS reports. Surveys and polls often use estimates and approximations of figures from samples to report their findings. The use of samples as well as estimates and approximations signal how difficult it is to collect accurate and precise data, especially when dealing with large groups of people who are undocumented. Under threat of persecution or other legal penalties, it is almost impossible to collect accurate and precise data on undocumented immigrants. In addition, polls and surveys based on public opinion usually rely on conjectures based on sampled data for convenience and practicality purposes. As such, the research and researcher are mindful of the limitations that exist, during data collection from primary sources and the reporting and interpretation of these data in secondary sources. In order to mitigate the impact of such limitations, the research obtained information from highly reputable newspapers, media polls and surveys, journals and scholars.

Contributions and Possible Future Research Areas

It is the researcher's hope that the analysis of the different tensions identified serve as a springboard to understand the root causes of conflict in the discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States so that a more constructive discourse can be facilitated that addresses the national interests of the United States and leads to better understanding of the country's unresolved immigration issues. This quest to understand the root causes of conflict should also be supported by paying attention to public discourse on undocumented immigration and having open, honest conversations that is

reflective of people's concerns and fears. Armed with such information, a better understanding of the root causes of conflict can be formulated so that a new discourse can be constructed that is reflective of facts on the ground and rid of inaccurate assumptions and misperceptions. This effort is important because discourse informs immigration policy and public attitudes towards undocumented immigrants. The view of undocumented immigrants as threats and criminals who pose a danger to society causes fear in citizens and leads to insecurity, and the reconstruction of the discourse is important in helping to allay these fears.

Along the lines of reconstructing the discourse on undocumented immigration in the United States in the 2000s, it is also important to note that the construction of undocumented immigrants as criminal Others fuels the logic that "it is the mere presence of unauthorized immigrants that constitutes the 'illegal immigration problem', not the United States history of policy contradictions and dysfunctions" (Dick, 2011). Thus, if undocumented immigrants are the problem, then the "solution" is to exclude them, "whether through deportation, detention, or denying such immigrants access to employment, higher education, drivers licenses, public benefits" (Coutin 2005, p.7 as cited in Dick, 2011). As a result of their construction as criminal others, undocumented immigrants are not just denied citizenship but their human rights as well (Dick, 2011). It is in this vein, that immigrant rights activists have argued that the term "illegal immigrant" criminalizes those it is used in reference to, and, in effect, dehumanizes them in the process. Functionalizing undocumented immigrants, or defining them in terms of what they do also leads to dehumanization because undocumented immigrants aren't just

workers, but family and community members and ignoring that aspect of their social reality denies them of their humanity. It also informs narrow immigration policy goals that construct them as workers and fails to fully integrate them into their communities and societies. In order to allay fear about transience and disorder in communities about undocumented immigrants, policies that seek to provide them with legal status so that they can work ought to consider the implications of undocumented immigrants leaving these communities.

Dick (2011) discusses an important tension that the researcher recommends as a future research area, and that is the tension between human right and sovereignty. She points out that the conflation of “illegal alien” with “Mexican immigrant” and “personhood” with “citizenship” in an attempt to resolve this tension creates a scenario where “ones humanity depends upon one’s right to occupy territory...this nativist personhood creates a disturbing justification for the defense of sovereignty: if unauthorized immigrants are not fully persons, we need not concern ourselves with their humanity in developing policies to eliminate them.” How can the field of conflict resolution attempt to resolve this tension and can we have human rights and sovereignty as co-existing concepts in the framework of international relations when trying to address the international migration problem?

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